

First-hand
information

How do people live in the GDR

**Living standards
and way of life
under socialism**

PANORAMA DDR

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The German Democratic Republic has now existed for 25 years in the heart of Europe. It is a socialist state in which workers, cooperative farmers, members of the intelligentsia and all other sections of the population share political and economic power.

Allied with the Soviet Union and the whole socialist community we have embarked on the road to a new society, a road that is as good as it is complicated. In a joint effort we continue to forge further ahead with each day that passes.

What has this new society—socialism—brought people in the GDR? How do working men and women live in the GDR? What are their living standards?

It is much easier to ask such questions than to answer them. It is not wages and prices alone that count however important they may be. To live is more than having food and drink, clothing and housing. A decent life includes more. It also raises questions like these:

What educational opportunities are there for myself and my children? What influence do I have on developments in the country? How secure is my job? Is there an equitable distribution of values? Am I a mere figure in my place of work or do I have a say? What share do I have in intellectual life? What does the future hold for me and my family?

So many questions. We will try and answer them.

I.

What is meant by standard of living?

"Money is not everything but it eases your mind", says a German proverb. Unquestionably, the development of people's income is one aspect of their standard of living. What is the average income of an industrial or office worker in the GDR? How has it progressed?

Income development

Just as elsewhere in the socialist world the average income of workers, manual and non-manual, has steadily increased ever since the GDR was founded. There have been no setbacks whatever, neither by pay cuts nor devaluation of the currency. The planned socialist economy has protected the working population from any kind of crisis or inflationary developments.

As compared with 1955 the average gross earnings of industrial and office workers in the socialist economy of the GDR has almost doubled. In 1973 the average wage was already as high as 835 marks. These developments were accompanied by stable or, in part, falling prices. This is to say that in contrast to capitalist states the rise in gross earnings corresponds roughly to an equal rise in real income.

	1955	1960	1965	1970	1973
Index of income (1955 = 100)	100	128.5	146.5	174.8	191.9
Index of prices and charges (1960 = 100)	110.4	100	100.1	99.9	99.5

People's income has grown at a particularly fast rate in recent years. This is the result of the policy as outlined by the party of the working class at its Eighth Congress in 1971 and then put into practice. The Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) has made it the primary task to ensure a further increase in the living and cultural standards of the people, especially of the workers. In 1971-2 alone pay increases became effective for 2.3 million employees. Those benefiting from them included foundry and power station workers, miners, transport and postal workers, health workers, employees of cultural establishments, supervisory workers in industry and agricultural processing with special emphasis on the lower income brackets. The end-of-the-year bonuses went up considerably. They are now paid to all those employed in socialist industry.

It should also be noted here that at the same time the biggest-ever increase in pensions was introduced for 3.9 million old-age pensioners. The average rise in 1973 was 15 per cent with prices remaining unchanged, and here again the emphasis was on the less well-off.

The result was that while the population's net monetary income rose by an average of 3.9 per cent between 1966 and 1971 it was 15 per cent higher in 1973 than it had been in 1970. Even faster was the increase in factory and office workers' income during the same period: almost 18 per cent in the course of only three years. In 1974 the net monetary income of the population is to go up by another 4.5 per cent.

Three aspects should be borne in mind in this context: Firstly, wages have risen at a steady pace without the need for any social conflicts or strikes. The party of the working

class and the workers' and farmers' government take the measures required in agreement with the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions (FDGB) in direct response to the greater achievements of the working people, the added economic potential of the socialist state.

Secondly, the steady rise in incomes has taken place not only with prices remaining stable but also with workers' compulsory contributions to old-age and social insurance schemes remaining at the same level. Since 1946 they have invariably amounted to 10 per cent of the gross wages with 600 marks as the upper limit subject to contributions. This is to say that any increase in gross wages is offset neither by soaring prices nor by progressing taxes and contributions. Rather, it finds its expression in fast-rising net wages and genuine purchasing power. Hence under socialism an increase in net income is tantamount to an increase in real income.

Thirdly, the average wages mentioned are those of workers, manual and non-manual. Unlike statistics in capitalist countries they do not include the astronomical salaries of top managers and executives who earn 20, 50 or 70 times as much as the ordinary worker so that average figures are forced upwards.

It must also be noted that the standard of living of a family is not only determined by the father's paypacket. What matters is the family income. In the GDR more than four-fifths of all women (84 per cent) go out to work, which fact is chiefly due to full equality and exemplary social services. This adds to a family's average income.

Equal pay for equal work is a principle applied everywhere in this country to women and young persons. As a result of systematic promotion by the state the proportion of women and young people employed in skilled trades and professions is much higher than in capitalist countries.

In 1972 an average factory or office workers' family of four earned a monthly household net income of 1,307 marks.

The average real income of all factory and office workers' households in the GDR available for consumption went up

from 810 marks in 1960 to 1,319 marks in 1972. This is to say that it rose by no less than 509 marks or 60.2 per cent in 12 years.

Development of prices, rents and charges

Talking about the standard of living the next consideration after the average income is what a family has to spend on the various items. What is the cost of staple foods, how much is paid in rents and charges? Is the cost of living rising all the time, are price increases a regular feature of life or are stable prices guaranteed?

These are crucial questions for a family with an average budget. Even more so if several children have to be fed and clothed during their years at school, apprenticeship and university studies. A nominal rise in the gross earnings, however substantial, makes no one happy when taxes and fees, rents and prices climb just as fast or even faster to reach astronomical proportions.

In the GDR as a socialist country prices, rents and charges are stable. With a few minor exceptions they differ in no way from those 10, 15 or 20 years ago. All prices are fixed by the state and no one may change them arbitrarily, neither in production nor in trade.

The Eighth Congress of the SED vigorously rejected any trend towards illegal price increases. On the initiative of the party of the working class the law on the Five-Year Plan for the development of the GDR's economy in 1971-75 expressly stipulated: "No increases in the retail prices of consumer goods may be introduced under the Five-Year Plan. Supplies in the lower price categories shall be guaranteed in line with demand." The law contains the pledge of continued price pegging for major goods and services.

Here is a short survey:

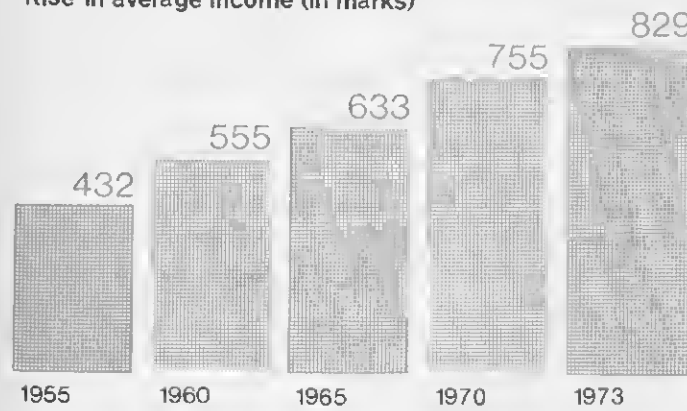
Index of retail prices, service charges and fares (1960 = 100)

	1950	1955	1960	1965	1970	1973
Food and kindred products	230.2	111.6	100.0	99.9	100.9	101.6
Consumer durables	165.9	111.8	100.0	99.8	98.0	95.9
Service charges and fares	102.3	101.1	100.0	101.8	101.9	102.6

Price stability exerts a very positive influence on the development of living standards. Any pay increase becomes fully effective. There is nobody to await the next day with anxiety. Nobody has ever had the right to increase rents. Whoever moved into a flat at whatever date pays the same low rent today as he did at the beginning and in part it is even lower.

It must be noted in this context that the decision to charge slightly higher rents for comfortable modern flats constructed between 1967 and 1970 has been reversed. For 290,000 families living in such flats on a monthly income of no more than

Rise in average income (in marks)



2,000 marks the rent was reduced to the general level within everybody's reach. GDR citizens spend between 4 and 5 per cent of their family income on rent.

Later in this brochure we will deal in greater detail with prices, rents and charges. Let us add here only that all staple foods, convenience goods, service charges, fares, postal, electricity and gas charges are both cheap and stable in the GDR. They do not strain the family budget overmuch and can always be counted in as invariable quantities.

Social security and social justice

The fact remains that even the relationship of wages and prices does not provide any reliable information on the standard of living in a given country. What about job security? To what extent is the national income fairly distributed? These are fundamental issues on which hinge the weal and woe of working people, their happiness and satisfaction.

A distinctive feature of working people's life in the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries is the high measure of social security ensured by the policy of the party of the working class, by the socialist state.

GDR citizens do not know any unemployment. They do not know the fear of losing their jobs. The right to a job is not only stipulated in Article 24 of the Constitution. The socialist planned economy guarantees full employment in practice.

GDR citizens do not know any crises. They are hit neither by overproduction crises in the course of which hundreds of thousands of workers, manual and non-manual, are laid off and innumerable farms and craftsmen's establishments ruined nor by structural crises which lead to the closing down of factories in individual branches and put the burden on the workers affected who are forced to seek new jobs. Nor do they know any monetary crises, or inflationary money devaluation eroding their savings deposits.

This is not to say that all difficulties have been overcome.

Our economy entered upon a difficult heritage. The destruction wrought by the war was compounded by major economic disproportions. While we had a manufacturing industry in the Soviet occupation zone in 1945 there was no basic industry to sustain it. To make things worse, we are a country poorly equipped with raw materials and largely dependent on imports. Hence the construction of a domestic basic industry and of an efficient export industry consumed a great deal of our potential and funds. To this fact one must add the losses incurred at the time we had an open frontier with the Federal Republic through currency manipulations and the luring away of trained personnel. And the economic boycott imposed on the country for many years should not be forgotten, either. So there subsist certain shortcomings in various sectors of production and distribution.

Just as elsewhere in the world it is true that we can distribute only what we produce. But since the GDR is a socialist country it is equally true that what we produce is fairly distributed. Social justice is just as characteristic of our life as is social security.

For example, the number of flats built is still inadequate despite the great efforts made by building workers in the last three years. And yet, no one may engage in speculations to make a profit out of the housing stress. It is inconceivable for flats to remain vacant because those in need of housing space cannot afford the rackrents charged by speculators. Flats are distributed with the cooperation of housing commissions acting in an honorary capacity, priority being given to shift workers, single mothers and families with several children.

It is also a matter of course for the bulk of modern flats to be made available to production workers who contribute most to the national wealth. Over and above this, the socialist state ensures an above-average growth of housing construction at the expense of other building projects to provide an overall solution to the problem as soon as possible.

This is an example of what we consider to be social justice. People in this country do not live in abundance. But they do not know the yawning gulf between immense wealth, luxury

and wastefulness on the one hand and social decline, poverty and hunger on the other. No one may enrich himself at other people's cost. There are neither sumptuous villas and princely palaces nor casual wards and slums, neither playboys nor beggars, neither casinos nor poorhouses.

As citizens of a socialist state all people in the GDR can make a living. They live in security with no need to fight for a livelihood.

Money is not the only consideration

At this point at the latest it must be said that as socialists we see the term 'standard of living' in wider terms. We do not regard it as the mere sum total of statistical data and economic indicators. Money is not the only consideration. Rather, we speak about living and cultural standards the raising of which we consider to be our primary task. So what is at stake is man as an individual and social being and the full realization of his aptitudes, of all his talents and individual values.

Consequently, the term 'standard of living' also includes the level of education, the guarantee of equal educational opportunities, the participation of workers in intellectual and cultural life and the extent of their creative activities.

Just as in all socialist countries (and for over 55 years in the Soviet Union) the educational privileges of the few have been abolished completely and definitively in the GDR. The decisive factor in the type and scope of a person's schooling, his career and study is not his father's purse but only his own ability, knowledge and skill. Under the Constitution any young person has the right and the opportunity to attain high educational standards. No one needs to have any worries about a good vocational training.

Some 90 per cent of all young people complete compulsory education at a ten-year general polytechnical school. About 99 per cent of all young people receive full vocational training.

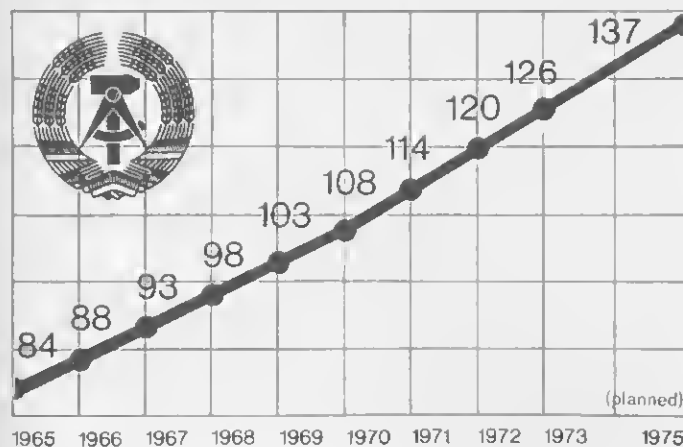
Fifty-eight per cent of the student population are the sons and daughters of workers and farmers.

Hundreds of thousands of workers, manual and non-manual, make use of the existing variety of opportunities for continued training, notably correspondence courses, factory education centres, special classes, for women etc. and by raising their qualification obtain higher pay. There are no blind alleys in the educational system. No one is doomed to end up as an unskilled worker.

Art and culture are accessible to all in the GDR. Admission fees at theatres and museums, concert halls and cinemas are low. Good books and gramophone records are cheap. The party of the working class, the trade unions, the government agencies and the public organizations make every effort to promote people's interest in culture and their understanding of art.

Hence it is one aspect of living standards in the GDR that—as an investigation in Halle and Leipzig county showed—54 per cent of working-class households own more than 100

National income produced (in 1,000 million marks)



books each. To give another example, the VIIth Fine Arts Exhibition of the GDR in Dresden was seen by 655,000 people including very many production teams from socialist enterprises and cooperative farms.

The widespread conquest of education, art and culture by workers and farmers, indeed by the whole people is characteristic of a new, socialist way of life.

The society you live in

This brings us to the decisive aspect determining people's life more than anything else: the social system, the society you live in.

Who calls the tune in the state? For whose benefit are the results of work? What does a man count for, how is he judged? What is the policy pursued by the government? Who does the country side with? All these are questions determining the way you live, whether you can live life to the full as a satisfied and happy human being or whether you are worried, unbalanced, restless with no real aim in life.

The GDR is a socialist state. It is an integral part of the great community of socialist states, of that new world of socialism which was born in Russia on 7 November 1917 and whose mainstay and lodestar is the Soviet Union in which the exploitation of one individual by another was ended for the first time in human history.

For us the new life began on 8 May 1945 when the armies of the socialist Soviet Union had brought Nazi imperialism to its knees at colossal sacrifices and with unparalleled heroism. This provided the workers, the farmers, indeed all working people in what was then the Soviet occupation zone with the chance of striking a completely new path. And we have seized this chance, assisted by our Soviet friends and comrades and led by the SED, the united Marxist-Leninist party of the working class.

In the GDR, which was founded on 7 October 1949, there

are no corporations and big private bands. The working class rules supreme. Public ownership of the means of production provides the basis for new, socialist relations of production, for new, socialist relations between people, which are increasingly marked by the sense of solidarity typical of the working class. All this serves the welfare of the individual, the common weal, the thriving of the community of socialist states, the international solidarity of all working people.

Thus has emerged, under the conditions of the rule of the working class, a new feeling of security and comradeship, self-fulfilment and genuine freedom.

We do not, therefore, overstate our case when we say that the social relations are the decisive yardstick for the standard and real quality of life. The entirety of man's living conditions depend on these social relations. The society you live in determines how you live. So let us begin with this overriding question.

II.

Who controls the country's wealth?

The question as to who controls the country's wealth, as to who owns the mines, the big industrial concerns, and the land, in brief the means of production, is of crucial importance for the living conditions of wage and salary earners, for the majority of the population. This has been shown by history.

Who owns factories and offices?

In the GDR as a socialist state all the country's wealth is now the property of the people: the mineral resources, the factories, the banks and insurance companies, the department stores and the means of transport. A worker does not only get his wages but he is also one of 17 million owners of the nationally-owned enterprises. There are no corporations or shareholders to live on his work.

As of 1973, 99.4 per cent of all manual and non-manual workers in the GDR's industry were employed in nationally-owned enterprises. These socialist enterprises accounted for 99.6 per cent of the industrial output. What they produce is fully for the benefit of the whole working population.

Public property came into existence in a very democratic procedure. Following the collapse of the imperialist Nazi regime and the liberation of our people by the victorious armies of the Soviet Union we availed ourselves of the opportunity to make a new beginning along democratic lines. On 30 June

1946, 77.62 per cent of all those entitled to vote called for the nationalization of firms owned by capitalist war profiteers in a referendum held in Saxony. Ever since the working class and its party have made every effort to multiply and develop the property of the people.

Socialist relations of production also prevail in the agriculture of the GDR. Under a democratic land reform in 1945 all of the feudal and capitalist landed property was confiscated. Between 1952 and 1961 the farmers pooled their holdings in cooperative farms (LPG), large and efficient agricultural enterprises using modern equipment and advanced farming methods. In 1971, socialist enterprises (LPG and state farms) engaged already some 95 per cent of all those employed in agriculture and forestry. They accounted for 95.7 per cent of the net product.

Finally, it should be emphasized that socialist relations of production are also increasingly emerging in the crafts, also in the shape of cooperatives. In 1973 there existed 2,782 craft production cooperatives with 134,905 members.

Hence there are two forms of socialist property in the GDR: general public property belonging to the whole community and cooperative property jointly owned by members of a cooperative. Alongside these there are still self-employed craftsmen and retail dealers who enjoy support from the socialist state in line with their importance in the service industries. But it is socialist property that plays the decisive role.

For all those employed in socialist enterprises the change in the form of ownership did not only affect their relationship with their place of work under the law of property but also their entire status in the enterprise, in the community, in the state. They are owners of the factories, and the works managers – most of them of working-class origin and trained and appointed by the socialist state – are accountable to them as their trustees.

Whatever workers, engineers or cooperative farmers in the GDR do with their hands, whatever ideas they put forward to improve techniques and develop new products will be for their own benefit and for that of the whole community.

Who runs the state and the economy?

It is an old experience that whoever holds economic power also holds political power. Under socialism the working class not only owns the enterprises but also calls the tune in the state. Public property is the stable foundation for socialist state power.

When the omnipotence of the big companies was shattered the hour of freedom and democracy had come for the workers by hand and by brain, for the intellectuals and for the farmers. A completely new state emerged in which the workers lead the way. From the top downwards, i.e. from Parliament via the government and regional councils to the armed forces, police and judiciary representatives of the working class hold all key posts and exercise power in conjunction with the other working people. There is no class of civil servants and top managers.

That workers or the sons and daughters of workers have the biggest say everywhere in the state and the economy can be proved very exactly:

Members of Parliament	54 per cent
Deputies of local assemblies	63 per cent
Managers of socialist enterprises	75 per cent
Public prosecutors	80 per cent
Judges	75 per cent
Officers in the National People's Army	80 per cent

Under these circumstances it is only natural that all decisions—whatever the problem at issue may be—are taken from the angle of the working class and all working people, i.e. the majority of the people.

In the GDR as a socialist state of the workers and farmers the party of the working class, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, is the decisive political force.

By its aims, its practical activity and its social structure the SED is a genuine party of the working class. It was under its leadership that the antifascist-democratic revolution was carried out in the GDR, that the foundations were laid for

socialist construction and that an advanced socialist society is being built successfully today. The SED arouses and promotes the initiative of all citizens for the further advancement of the socialist system.

The guiding principles of all its activities were couched in these words by Erich Honecker, a political prisoner throughout 12 years of the Nazi regime and now First Secretary of the Central Committee, at the Eighth Congress of the party: "We know but one aim that permeates the entire policy of our party: to do everything for the welfare of man, for the happiness of the people, for the interests of the working class and of all working people. This is what socialism is all about. This is what we are working and striving for."

In line with this objective the SED, as a Marxist-Leninist party of the working class, considers its task to be to provide political guidance for social development in the German Democratic Republic on the basis of a scientifically substantiated strategy and tactics.

The Eighth Party Congress ushered in a new phase in the development of the SED and of our republic. It mapped out the road ahead for socialist society and stressed the need further to enhance the leading position of the working class in all fields of life and further to increase its share in the national income created. With its vast social and welfare programme the Eighth Party Congress introduced a long series of measures designed to make the life of workers and their families, the life of all working people more beautiful, happier and richer and to bring out all the objective advantages inherent in the socialist system. The Eighth SED Congress sparked off a big creative initiative among the working population that led to a rapid stable growth of production and living standards.

Since then, the relationship of trust existing between the party and the working class, between the party and the people has become even closer. The share of workers and young people in party membership has continued to increase. 78.6 per cent of all those admitted into the ranks of the SED since the Eighth Party Congress are workers. 64 per cent of the intellectuals who are members of the SED have a working-

class background. At present, the social structure of the party is as follows:

Workers	56.6 per cent
Cooperative farmers	5.6 per cent
Members of the intelligentsia	18.6 per cent

The fact that the Marxist-Leninist party of the working class constitutes the decisive political force in the state and in the economy is one of the most important achievements of the workers and farmers, indeed of all working men and women in the GDR.

For whose benefit is production

Whatever is produced under socialism is directly or indirectly for the benefit of the producer.

Firstly, directly in the shape of wages, salaries, bonuses and end-of-the-year bonuses. This is known as individual consumption.

Secondly, in the form of social service benefits, spending on health, education, cultural facilities, holiday schemes etc. This is known as public consumption regulated via the national budget.

Thirdly, in the shape of the enlargement, modernization and construction of nationally-owned enterprises. This is known as accumulation, which provides the basis for the continued expansion and improvement of production with the aim of satisfying people's needs to an ever higher extent.

To put it in a nutshell: Any progress achieved in raising labour productivity leads to improvements in people's living and cultural standards.

In 1973 the national income amounted to 126,700 million marks representing a 5.5 per cent increase on 1972. Its distribution was as follows:

Consumption	77.9 per cent
of which individual	67.7 per cent
of which public	10.2 per cent
Accumulation	22.1 per cent

It can be seen from this that people's pay is the main source of their income. The amount of wages paid is fixed in skeleton agreements concluded for individual branches of the economy between the competent authorities and the trade union. They are confirmed by the State Secretariat for Employment and Wages.

The principle of payment according to the work done is the linchpin of any socialist wage policy. Among the principles of the wage policy worked out by the Eighth SED Congress we also find the need for a further increase of the share of the working class in the distribution of national income.

Over and above the standard wages there exists a vast system of bonuses paid to acknowledge outstanding results in production. Any nationally-owned enterprise is required by law to set up a bonus fund into which flows part of the net profit realized by the enterprise concerned depending on the extent to which the planned output and the key plan targets are attained or exceeded.

The maximum amount that may be contributed to the fund is 900 marks per employee and the minimum (paid when the plan is not fulfilled) is 80 per cent of the planned bonus fund. It should be noted here that in 1973 98 per cent all of centrally administered nationally-owned enterprises fulfilled their annual plans. The fund is used to reward special achievements and initiatives to increase output, raise quality standards and improve working and living conditions.

In addition, end-of-the-year bonuses have been regularly paid to wage-earners and salaried staff of production enterprises of the GDR. Depending on the level of plan fulfilment, length of service and achievement they may be as high as 150 per cent of a person's net monthly earnings.

Average amount of end-of-the-year bonuses

in	1970	1971	1972	1973
	480 marks	590 marks	650 marks	711 marks

How are profits divided up?

We have just mentioned the bonus fund. But this is only part of the profit realized. It adds to people's individual wages. Under socialist conditions profits are, however, also widely used for a variety of fringe benefits. Hence the profits made largely serve public consumption.

Depending on labour productivity, the quality of its products and the reduction of prime cost enterprises set up a fund used to improve working conditions, construct holiday camps and rest homes or build owner-occupied houses for workers.

Part of the net profits are earmarked for fringe benefits. These include various cultural and sporting activities and social welfare measures. This explains why nationally-owned enterprises have their own sports centres and houses of culture, that a large proportion of the staff regularly attend theatre or concert performances at little cost and that many engage in artistic activities in amateur choirs and orchestras, vocal groups, painting circles, amateur film studios or workers' dramatic societies. All this is generously and systematically promoted using the enterprise's funds.

Substantial sums from the fringe benefits fund are spent to subsidize meals which are available in factories at an average price of 70 or 80 pfennigs. More than 5,500 enterprises and institutions have their own canteen. In large factories employees may choose between a variety of meals with prices ranging from 60 pfennigs to 2 marks.

But as we said before enterprises do not keep all their profits. The contributions from nationally-owned enterprises and combines (large industrial complexes) are the chief source of income for the national budget. In this way they serve both to develop the socialist economy, e. g. by expanding its energy basis, and to improve working and living conditions ever further. If the GDR now can refer to a widely appreciated modern educational system and a largely exemplary national health service this is in no small measure due to the fact that the profits realized by the nationally-owned

enterprises are available for these purposes in the interests of the whole community.

In 1973 the enterprises and combines of the GDR's nationally-owned economy earned something like 40,000 million marks in profits. The contributions to the public treasury amounted to some 28,000 million marks or 70 per cent of the total.

What are public funds?

The working people's living standards under socialism are largely determined by the amount of public funds available and by the way they are distributed. They represent earnings that must be added to a person's wages and that have a tangible effect on the living standard of any wage-earner's or salaried employee's family.

Apart from guaranteeing equal opportunities in education, health services of a high standard and the promotion of art and culture they are earmarked for what are definitely social purposes. They serve to peg the prices of staple foods and consumer durables such as children's clothes. They help maintain low rents and charges. They make it possible to have a child cared for in the kindergarten at a cost of no more than 15 marks a month. And there are many other things.

The amount of these public funds conducive to the overall development of a cultured way of life of a socialist type grows even faster than individual wages, e.g. by 6.5 per cent in 1974. The social consumption fund added about 360 marks to the monthly earnings of a family of four in 1970. By 1973 this figure had risen to 511 marks.

All this goes to show that under socialism the profits earned by the workers flow back into their pockets in some way or other. A better life is no dreams of the future. It is discernible every day in the shape of higher wages and pensions, improved working conditions, fresh benefits for families with children, for women and mothers, for shift workers and in the form of a wider range of reasonably priced consumer goods.

Whom does the plan serve?

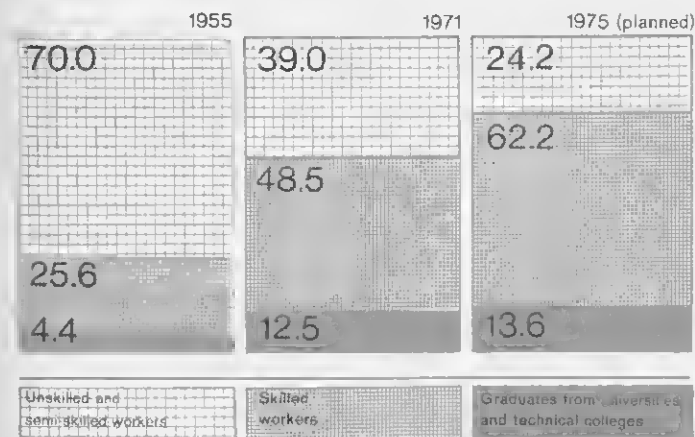
We are already answering the question as to whom the plan serves. In the GDR, just as in the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, it serves the people whose needs are the decisive yardstick for the elaboration of any plan. It serves to implement the primary task outlined by the Eighth Congress of the SED, i.e. further improvements in the people's living and cultural standards on the basis of a high rate of development of socialist production, increased efficiency, scientific and technological progress and growing labour productivity.

A socialist planned economy ensures a harmonious, stable, crisis-free development of all branches of the economy in proper proportion. It makes it possible for double working, wastage, structural and overproduction crises to be ruled out. The plan lays down the priorities of development.

Let us take a closer look at some of the key figures contained in the annual economic plan for 1974.

Manufacturing output is to go up by 6.7 per cent or almost

Level of qualification of the labour force (in per cent)



14,000 million marks. To attain this goal labour productivity is to rise by 6.0 per cent. This will be reflected in a 4.5 per cent increase in the population's monetary income with prices remaining stable.

The main emphasis is on housing construction. Plans are for 86,500 flats to be built, i.e. 8.6 per cent more than in 1973. Over and above this, 30,300 flats are to be modernized, converted and expanded. To ensure low rents the state makes available ever higher subsidies each year. 19,150 places in kindergartens and 11,100 in crèches are to be newly provided.

The production of goods that are still in short supply is being accelerated without increasing prices or speculating on demand.

And how is a plan drawn up?

To put it briefly: in a highly democratic manner. It is not a decree prepared behind closed doors by some group of anonymous people. Nor is it imposed on the workers in their factories by administrative methods.

There exists a special central planning body of the workers' and farmers' state, the State Planning Commission, which comes under the GDR Government and is thus answerable to Parliament. Proceeding from an analysis of economic development and a scientific forecast of future processes it cooperates with the various ministries to lay the foundations for the long-term planning of the main trends and basic proportions and for the exactly budgeted Five-Year Plans and annual plans.

Differentiated plan targets broken down to individual branches of the national economy are then fixed for enterprises and institutions in what is known as "plan directives". These are discussed by the employees concerned. New proposals are put forward and initiatives proposed which are then summarized in what is known as the draft plan of an enterprise. Only after this is the revised plan discussed and confirmed by the People's Chamber to acquire legal force.

Socialist planned economy has already proved superior in all decisive questions. It is highly effective. It can refer to high and, what is more, stable rates of growth. It does not know any lagging behind in the fulfilment of tasks concerning the whole community, or any neglect of the infrastructure, of education, health and social services and of the human environment in favour of an explosion of private profits. It is not affected by cutthroat competition, crises, mass unemployment or inflationary trends.

A factor of inestimable importance in this context is the fact that in the process of socialist integration our economy is linked by ever closer ties with the national economies of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. Their joint long-term programme makes for mutual coordination and cooperation from research and development to production and distribution. This tends to slash costs and to multiply the potential of the individual countries, which, in turn, has a beneficial effect on people's standard of living.

We do not conceal, however, that we have not yet fully exploited all the potentialities of socialist planned economy, that new problems are arising all the time. For example, fashionable articles call for greater flexibility in planning. The further improvement of planning standards as to fully satisfy people's needs thus remains one of the foremost tasks posed by the party of the working class in the construction of an advanced socialist society.

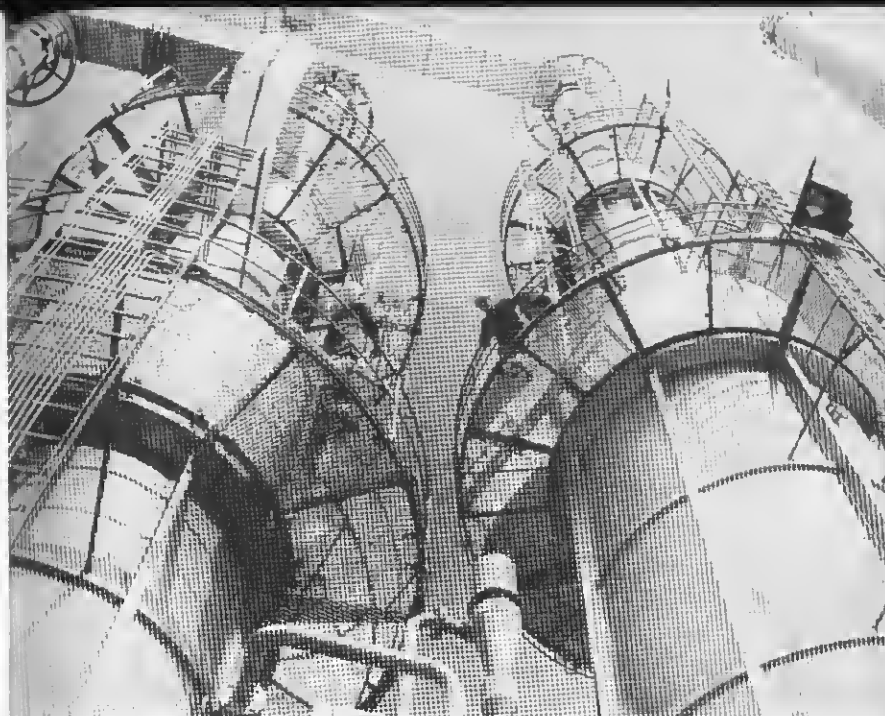


A happy day. The Voigts, a family of five, moving into a modern four-room flat in Berlin's Frankfurter Allee



Cordial meeting with building workers. Erich Honecker, First Secretary of the SED Central Committee, gathering information on housing conditions for working-class families and on the quality of building work.

Socialist cooperation. Leonid and Lev (left), two Soviet chief assemblers, give their GDR colleagues Volker and Günter at the Neubrandenburg tyre factory useful hints for the most efficient use of machinery from the Soviet Union.



Ultra-modern Installations at the Schwedt petrochemical complex process the oil coming in from the Soviet Union via a 4,500-kilometre pipeline. It provides a secure raw materials basis for our nationally-owned industry.

Youthful energy marks the 'Julius Fucik' youth crew at the nationally-owned Robotron plant in Dresden. They specialize in the perfection of electronic computers.



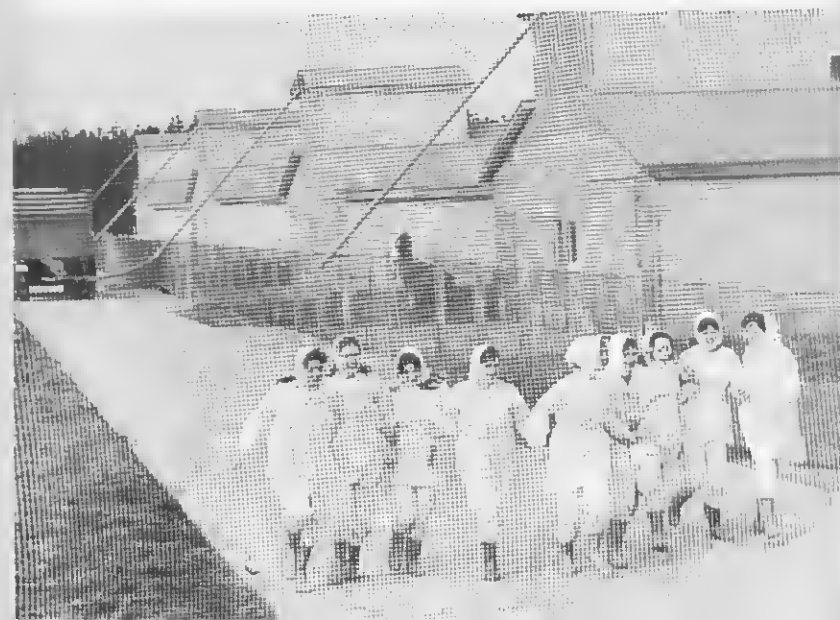


Socialism changes village life. At harvest time combine harvesters of the E 512 type deal with tracts of up to 1,500 hectares in multi-machine operations. Giant fodder silos and housing for thousands of animals are characteristic of modern large-scale cooperative production. Village life is increasingly being brought up to the standard of city life.



Like here at Spreenhagen many villages are provided with new housing complexes including kindergartens, supermarkets and service establishments.

Young women and girls operate modern production installations also in the countryside. Our picture shows apprentices at a poultry farm in Spreenhagen.





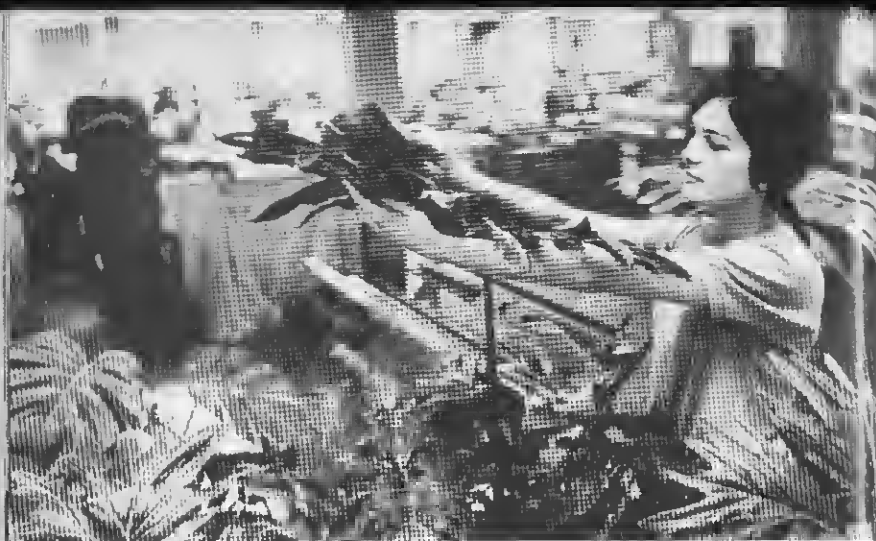
Self-confident workers play a major role in organizing and managing production and in improving working conditions.

Renate Gross is a crew leader at a yarn spinning mill in Leipzig and a member of the local disputes commission.

Made up of young innovators is the Reinhard Hanschke crew at the Oberspree cable-making factory. Their aim is the further automation of the production of high-voltage cables. The financial benefit is quite considerable both for the nationally-owned factory and for themselves.

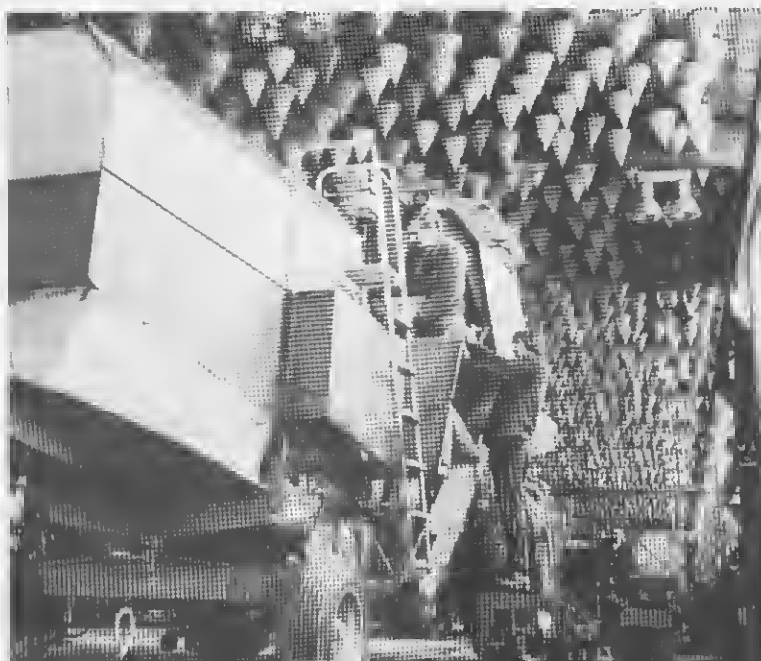


The men serving furnace no. 12 at the Brandenburg iron and steel works have every reason to be glad. Socialist rationalization has done away with what used to be gruelling working conditions. Semi- or fully automatic installations make for higher productivity and easier work.



A decent occupational environment is part of a socialist way of life. Well-appointed rest rooms, libraries, a sauna, hairdresser's shops and decorative plants all form part of it.

Elimination of disturbing factors: noise protection cones made of synthetic fibres provide better working conditions for fitters and mechanics at a repair centre in Hagenow.



III.

What are the rights of employees?

Work plays a decisive role in human life. Working man spends most of his life at his place of work. Therefore, his living conditions are greatly determined by the circumstances under which he works.

What marks working conditions in a nationally-owned enterprise?

In socialist enterprises there prevails a completely new sort of climate that is marked by fellowship, mutual aid and support. This is a consequence of the change in the relations of ownership.

As owners of their nationally-owned enterprise the workers, whether they are wage-earners or salaried staff, and the trade union representatives elected by them have a say in all matters affecting their enterprise, from social and production problems to long-term and annual plans. This right is expressly laid down in Article 42 of the GDR's socialist Constitution: "The working people shall participate, either directly or through the agency of their elected bodies, in the management of enterprises, the activities of which constitute the basis for creating and multiplying the nation's wealth."

Since in the socialist countries power is vested in the working class all legal and industrial stipulations proceed from the interests and needs of the workers and all other

working people. The party of the working class and the workers' and farmers' government in the GDR have made it the obligation of all executives in the state and in the economy, especially the works managers, to make sure that any progress in production, any move towards rationalization in an enterprise leads to an immediate improvement in the working and living conditions of the people affected and that with this aim in mind all measures are discussed with the staff thoroughly and in good time.

Let us also say some words about working hours. A five-day working week was introduced in August 1967 for all enterprises and institutions in the GDR with the sole exception of education. This also applies to the catering trade, transport services, trade etc. Weekly working hours are $43\frac{3}{4}$ in general and 42 for three-shift workers. Young people and women with several children work less hours.

How secure are people's jobs?

The question for the standard of living in a country chiefly is the question for the degree of social security provided.

All citizens of the GDR have the right to work and to a job. This is stipulated in Article 24 of the socialist Constitution. Everyone has the right to equal pay for equal work, to vocational training and further training. The socialist state guarantees the right to recreation, to health protection and safety at work, to material security in the event of illness, industrial injury, maternity, disablement and old age.

Since its foundation there has never been unemployment in the GDR and there is no one to expect any. No one needs to fear that he may be laid off or dismissed at the employer's discretion. The socialist planned economy, which is directed at the utilization of each person's capacity to multiply the nation's wealth does not allow creative abilities to lie idle.

The Labour Code contains the following far-reaching and legally binding guarantees against dismissal and unemployment:

1. "An enterprise may give notice to an employee only if it has failed to reach agreement with him on the assignment of another job within the same enterprise. If an enterprise gives notice it is required to give the employee support in good time so that he may find an acceptable employment elsewhere." (Art. 31, para. 4)

2. "Whenever an enterprise gives notice to or dismisses an employee without notice such a move requires the previous approval of the trade union branch committee or, if none exists, of the enterprise's trade union committee..." (Art. 34, para. 2)

3. "If the competent trade union committee withholds its consent a definitive decision shall be taken by the next higher trade union committee or executive." (Art. 34, para. 4)

As can be seen from this the final decision lies with the trade unions which will give their approval only if there are cogent reasons for giving notice. But even then the enterprise concerned is obliged to help find another acceptable job.

Young people enjoy special protection from dismissal as they can be given notice only with the approval of the district council. The same holds good of skilled workers up to the end of their first year of work after the completion of their vocational training. Similar stipulations are in force for persons persecuted under the Nazi regime, seriously handicapped people and tuberculosis patients, both acutely ill and convalescent.

Trade union officials may be given notice only with the consent of the next higher trade union committee. This also applies to members of disputes commissions.

Pregnant women may not be dismissed nor may mothers before the end of the sixth month after giving birth.

Every employee is entitled to enter a protest against the termination of his employment contract in whatever form with the elected disputes commission of his enterprise or with the district court.

How big is the trade union's say?

First of all, it should be noted that in the GDR the trade unions do not only operate within a given enterprise. The working class implements its leading role in the state and in society largely through the trade unions as its class organization. The trade union confederation, the FDGB, has a parliamentary group of its own and may introduce bills of law. This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter XII. But what do things look like on the shop floor?

In all enterprises and combines of socialist industry, in state farms, institutions and authorities there exist trade union committees (BGL) elected by the staff whose interests they represent. They have the right to take part in all meetings and deliberations of the management. They have the right to cooperate in determining pay and working conditions and have a voice in the distribution of the wage, bonus and fringe benefits funds.

The works managers are required for their part to cooperate with the trade unions, to give them information and to render account to trade union bodies about their activities. They are obliged to accept proposals and criticisms, to take them into account or set out the reasons for their rejection.

The Labour Code vests the trade union committees with the right to demand of senior managers that if works managers or executives fail to fulfil their duties correctly, violate socialist laws or disregard trade union rights those responsible will be called to account.

In 1972, 81.2 per cent of FDGB members took part in the elections for the BGL. Of the 390,893 elected trade union committee members 169,189 or 43.3 per cent are women and 33,000 or 8.4 per cent are young people. About one-third of all BGL chairmen are women. Two-thirds of all trade union committees at enterprise and branch level (AGL) are not members of any political party. However, the role of the trade unions in an enterprise goes well beyond the activities of the BGL and AG. 234,002 shop stewards represent the interests of their work-mates on the shop floor.

222,232 officials in charge of social insurance which is administered by the trade unions in the GDR perform all the tasks connected with it.

204,856 labour safety officials are endowed with far-reaching rights to check on the observance of legal provisions pertaining to safety at work and health protection.

87,605 elected worker-controllers keep a watchful eye on the utilization of public property and the abidance by the enterprise plans, investigate abuses and secure the necessary measures to improve working and living conditions.

An important job is also being done by the 220,428 trade union officials in charge of cultural affairs, the 177,413 sports organizers, the 104,311 members of women's committees and the 39,311 members of youth committees.

Taken all in all, one-third of the members of the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions hold an honorary function thus availing themselves in a very active manner of their democratic right to share in decision-making.

What influence can workers exert on planning and production?

The previous section has already conveyed some notion of this. Let us mention here three main forms guaranteeing the participation of all in planning and decision-making processes.

The chief method by which workers in nationally-owned enterprises bring their influence to bear on planning and production is the annual *plan discussion*. This active cooperation in the elaboration of the annual economic plan is an eloquent expression of socialist democracy on the shop floor.

The plan discussion, which is called for by the Labour Code, is initiated by a general meeting of the shop stewards. The works management and the BGL set out the tasks arising for the year ahead from the plan directive issued by the state. The plan is then broken down to individual branches and departments and discussed there. In this process the workers, sala-

ried employees and engineers put forward their suggestions and propose ways of solving the new tasks.

After a broad and thorough discussion of the plan during several weeks the trade union committee of the enterprise concerned formulates its viewpoint on the enterprise's draft plan which is then adopted by a general meeting of the shop stewards. The managers of nationally-owned enterprises and general managers of associations of such enterprises (VVB) may hand on their plan proposal to the superordinate economic body only in conjunction with a statement from the competent trade union body.

The right of workers to participate in the planning and management of production also finds its expression in the *collective agreement (BKV)* concluded between the works management and the trade union committee each year after discussion among the staff. It lists each other's measures and obligations concerning plan fulfilment, technological advance, vocational training and further training, safety at work and health protection, expansion of social and cultural facilities, bonuses and conditions for emulation. The management is required to account to the staff at regular intervals for the fulfilment of the agreement.

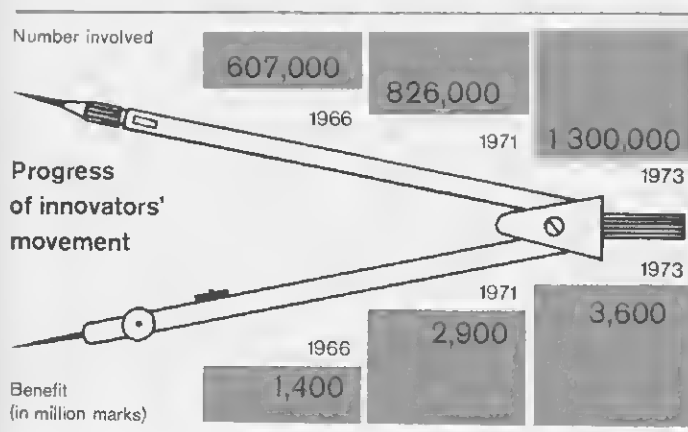
The *permanent production councils* are of decisive importance for the current cooperation of all working people in the management and planning of production. They are made up of expert and enterprising production workers, technicians and engineers, economists and scientists. The production councils are bodies elected by trade union members and operating under the direction of a trade union committee at factory or branch level. The Chairman of such a council is a member of the BGL or AGL. Permanent production councils exist in all major enterprises of socialist industry and the building trade, in state farms, trade, transport and communication undertakings and research institutes. At present, they comprise 176,584 elected members.

All problems arising in a factory are regularly discussed there, especially those on which hinge the fulfilment of the plan targets, the growth of labour productivity, the increase

of efficiency, the rapid exploitation of scientific and technological innovations and the improvement of working conditions. It is here that the ideas and suggestions of staff members from the various production departments, their worries and critical remarks find a ready audience. Every worker is thus given an opportunity to take part in running the factory and organizing the production process.

The decisions adopted by a production council are recommendations given to the works management. The manager is required to attend production council meetings, to examine all proposals submitted and to report on how they have been put into practice.

It is therefore not by chance that workers in the GDR consider it quite normal to refer to "their" factory and that whatever they say about it is preceded by the word "we". We build, we produce and we rationalize, they say rather than "they" or "the boss".



What are innovators?

The awareness of being not only a producer, but owner of an enterprise releases much energy and initiative among the workers in nationally-owned enterprises. A new attitude to work is emerging. Work, once a necessity to earn a living, becomes a genuine need, a field for creative activity and thought in the interests of the whole community.

Needless to say, this is a gradual process. A new, socialist attitude to work is not adopted overnight. But the feeling of being owners of socialist enterprises is already widespread. This is borne out by the "counter-plans" put forward by workers to exceed the state plan targets deliberately in specified areas through a variety of initiatives. This is borne out by the scope and the results of the socialist emulation movement for maximum efficiency. This is borne out by the existence of many thousands of socialist work crews or brigades as they are called here who have been awarded or are competing for the title of "Socialist labour team" for working, learning and living in a socialist way. And last but not least this is also borne out by the scope of the innovators' movement. Its development is particularly striking evidence of the emergence of a new, socialist-type attitude to work as it shows how many workers, manual and non-manual, have made it their business to ponder over how they can bring their enterprise, the national economy and the whole of society still faster ahead by technological improvements, developments and inventions.

In 1966, 607,000 employees acted as innovators. In the intervening period their figure has doubled. In 1973, every fourth employee, every seventh woman and every fourth young person was an innovator. Their ideas yielded an annual benefit in the neighbourhood of 3,600 million marks.

This creative intellectual activity of millions of workers, salaried employees, engineers and scientists, in which they engage over and above their normal professional duties, reflects the basic agreement of individual and public interests, which can be found only in a social system where the means

of production are public property and are used for no other purpose than to augment the nation's wealth.

Staff suggestions—even minor ones that ease a certain operation—are rewarded, depending on their usefulness, with at least 30 marks and no more than 30,000 marks. Inventions entitle their authors to a remuneration ranging from 75 to 200,000 marks. They will also receive a letter of acknowledgement and a certificate and may be awarded decorations, medals, prizes and honorary titles by the state.

What are the consequences of the scientific-technological revolution?

It goes without saying that also under socialism the scientific and technological revolution raises questions as to the restructuralization of enterprises and industries, the reassignment of labour and the higher demands made on their knowledge and skill. But these questions are solved with the workers and in their interests.

Just as in the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries the scientific and technological revolution in the GDR is organically linked with the advantages inherent in the socialist system: public ownership of the means of production, power vested in the working class, planned proportionate development of the national economy, creative participation and initiative of the working people. Thus, the scientific and technological revolution takes place without structural crises and massive layoffs. It is not carried through at the expense of the working people.

The workers are directly engaged in socialist rationalization from the outset. They help work out a blueprint for rationalization in their factory. They can prepare in good time for a job in a modern production site calling for a higher degree of technical knowledge. Forward planning in the whole economy makes it possible for a well-functioning system of further training to be set up which familiarizes workers with new

techniques even before they are introduced. If the same results and the same pay cannot be immediately attained in the new job the enterprise will make up the difference so that the worker will receive his usual wages.

Socialist rationalization is invariably linked up with improvements in working and living conditions, industrial health services and safety at work. Rationalization with the people for the people is the central idea of socialist policy in mastering the complicated problems of scientific and technological progress.

What about safety at work?

It is a basic consideration of the socialist state and of the trade unions that every industrial injury is one too many. It means suffering for the workers and their families and material losses for society.

Under the current Five-Year Plan 17,000 million marks are available for safety at work and industrial hygiene. This sum is 40 per cent higher than that in the last Five-Year Plan. To do as much as possible for the welfare of man is the overriding principle of socialist society.

Works managers and the bodies superordinate to them—ministries and associations of nationally-owned enterprises—are responsible for health protection and safety at work. It is their duty to take account of the needs of health protection and safety at work in the planning and management of production, research and development. The labour safety inspectors of the FDGB, the bodies of the national health service and of the Technical Control Service may issue instructions that are binding on works managers.

The law provides that production sites, installations and equipment must be designed, arranged and maintained in such a way that they guarantee a maximum degree of security and greatly reduce heavy physical and health-endangering work.

Every works manager is required to discuss the sickness

and accident figures regularly with the trade union committees and the local head of the industrial health service and to lay down immediate measures to eliminate the causes of diseases and injuries. The BGL and trade union executives may call for penalties to be inflicted on works managers and officials who fail to fulfil their obligations.

These stringent legal provisions, the large sums spent by the state, the activity of many voluntary aids and, first and foremost, the new working conditions existing in socialist enterprises have prevented an increase in the number of industrial injuries despite a steady growth of production.

Notifiable industrial injuries per 1,000 employees

1968	1970	1973
41.19	40.79	36.50

IV.

Do women enjoy equal rights?

One of the questions determining the working people's living and cultural standards, their whole way of life is the status of women in the community. In almost all countries of the world women make up roughly one half of the population. As a result of World War Two they even exceed the male population in the GDR by 3 per cent.

Equal pay for equal work

In the GDR the principle of full equality for women has been fixed by law for over 25 years. It has been largely put into practice. This is one of the greatest achievements of socialism. Women invariably get equal pay for equal work. This principle was already enshrined in the first Constitution of the GDR promulgated in 1949.

Today it is a matter of course for women to enjoy equal status in all fields of national life. 159 women and girls are members of the People's Chamber, the GDR's supreme law-making body, which is equivalent to 32 per cent of all M.P.s. Taken all in all, there are 62,328 female deputies in the various representative bodies, i.e. again roughly one-third of the total

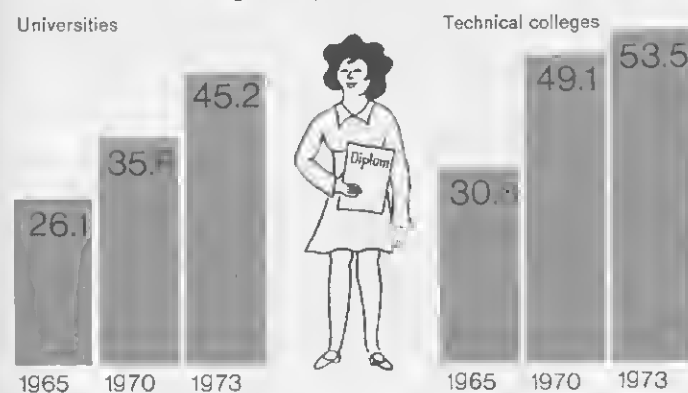
Women's equal status in professional life is the basis for this strong position in political decision-making bodies. In the

GDR, 84 per cent of all women of working age are gainfully employed. They make up half of the country's labour force.

This is important not only for the economic situation of women and for the income of their families. Since work plays a key role in the development of man's manual and mental faculties, in the training of his mind and the moulding of his character only the full participation of women and girls in social production enables them to develop all facets of their individuality.

Asked why they go out to work married women in the GDR will mostly reply that one of the reasons is to add to their family's income. Another is to be financially independent. But the chief reason is that they consider it more interesting and more satisfying to create something of their own than to remain confined to the kitchen. In a factory or office they will gain new impressions and gather fresh experience every day. They have a feeling of security among their work-mates. They feel that they are needed. They also gain more self-respect.

Proportion of women pursuing studies at universities and technical colleges (in per cent)



What is more, their own development the new way of looking at the world around them has an effect on their children who receive more mental stimuli from their parents and take more pride in them.

What are women's opportunities for education and promotion?

In the GDR all occupations are open to women, even those once reserved to men. They are not restricted to badly remunerated "women's occupations" or unskilled jobs. 46.9 per cent of all female industrial and office workers hold a skilled worker's certificate. Women already make up one-third of that part of the labour force with a university or technical college education.

Women and girls work as senior architects in big cities, as managers of large nationally-owned textile plants, as control platform operators in rolling mills, as diesel engine drivers of the state railways, as transport coordinators or civil engineers. They serve as judges, public prosecutors, mayors or even county council chairmen presiding over a territory inhabited by more than a million people as in Cottbus county.

More precisely, women supply one-third of all judges, one-fourth of school headmasters and one-fifth of mayors.

In socialist agriculture the scene is much the same. As of 1973, 223,400 women had acquired a skilled worker's certificate and 5,839 a supervisor's certificate. 66 per cent of all female cooperative farmers and farm workers have undergone full vocational training. The result is that women account for one-third of all members of LPG executives.

This effective equality has become possible because all barriers hampering women and girls in their career and denying them equal opportunities have been systematically removed. Prejudices have been gradually broken down, equal access to education provided, favourable working conditions

established and machines often adapted to the physical condition of women.

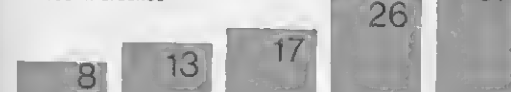
The Labour Code requires works managements to support working women "in such a way that they can undergo further training successfully without prejudice to the discharge of their duties as mothers." All further training schemes are listed in what is known as a women's promotion plan. Women's commissions set up by the trade unions check on its fulfilment.

A characteristic measure is that mothers undergoing training as a skilled worker in industrial enterprises or cooperative farms are released from work for one or two days a week without pay reduction.

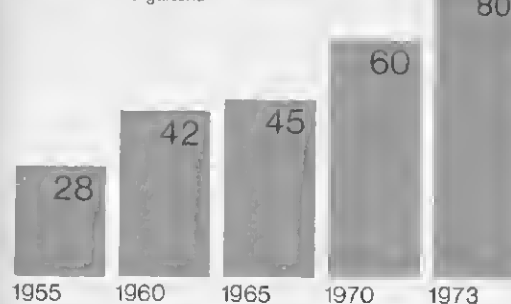
Special women's classes attached to universities and technical colleges must also be mentioned in this context. These train working women as engineers and cost engineers.

Nursery facilities for children below school age
(per cent children)

Places in crèches



Places in kindergartens



Students get two days off from work each week to pursue their studies while receiving their full average pay. When working women and girls enter a college for a full-time course they receive a grant representing 80 per cent of their average net earnings.

This means that on principle every woman has access to higher stages in her professional career. But there is no one to overlook the fact that in individual cases this path is often attended with difficulties and sacrifices. Therefore, the Eighth Congress of the SED laid special emphasis on "the gradual solution of those problems on which it depends whether a woman can really make full use of her equal rights."

As moves in this direction the expansion of services is given priority, catering and shopping facilities in enterprises are improved, the number of places in kindergartens and crèches is rapidly increased further, and husbands are encouraged by all public organizations to relieve their wives of a greater part of their domestic duties.

How are mother and child cared for?

It is a primary concern of the socialist state to make sure that women can bring up their children under the best possible conditions, in good health and without financial worries irrespective of whether they are married or not.

The first principle is that women shall have a baby at the time they want to. Our socialist state does not compel women to conceive a child and carry it to term when they consider this undesirable. Only children they want to have will enjoy their love and grow up in a harmonious family. In line with this idea the law provides in the GDR that "contraceptives prescribed by the doctor to women covered by a social insurance scheme are free of charge." And if, nevertheless, an unwanted pregnancy occurs women in the GDR are free to decide up to the twelfth week whether or not they want to have it terminated. All the treatment, including that before and after



Children are a major consideration in town planning under socialism. Even in the heart of the big cities there are playgrounds for them as well as open spaces for all those seeking a rest.



The needs of people are put in first place in factories and offices throughout the GDR. Like anybody else the employees of the 'Palla' textile mill enjoy free medical care at their modernly equipped factory-owned health centre. Dr Dieter Lorenz is there to look after their teeth.

The workers of the Schönebeck tractor plant may choose between various warm meals at prices between 70 pfennigs and one mark during each shift in their well-appointed works canteen. There are also two shops in the plant to help them save time.



Modern shopping centres offering goods at stable prices are now a familiar sight in cities big and small.

This flat has been given a complete overhaul. Hot water, bathroom and built-in kitchen now make it as comfortable as a modern flat. The rent charged, however, remains as low as before: 4 per cent of the family income.



Holiday at little cost. The Machajewski family with their four children—Ines, André, Reiner and Reni—had to pay a mere 270 marks for a 14-day holiday (with full board) spent at the trade-union-run 'Theo Neubauer' rest home at Tabarz in Thuringia.



Special promotion for newly weds. Interest-free loans for furnishing or converting a flat make it easier to start a family.



Children are dear to the heart of Liane Lang, mayor of Halle-Neustadt. Credit is due to her for the construction of a children's village with 1,000 places for the offspring of the local chemical workers.

The aged are not left alone. Old-age pensioner Leni Berner spends many afternoons with children and teen-agers. Activities range from handicrafts to excursions. In return, the kids help her in shopping and domestic duties (right).





Up-to-date education in the countryside. The pupils and the school shown on our picture are in the village of Mecklenburg in Wismar district. The building and the curricula differ in no way from those in a big city.

Special care for the handicapped. Regina is deaf. Ever since she was three she has enjoyed individual care at a special kindergarten. At seven, she will attend a special school to pave her the way for a life in equality. The cost is largely met by the state.



Polytechnical instruction is an achievement of socialism. From their 4th year at school children acquire technical skills and gain an insight into economic and technological processes. Experienced workers act as instructors.



Continued professional training involves millions of people in the GDR. Women and mothers enjoy special promotion. In special classes for women they may, for example, qualify for an engineer's diploma free of charge during working hours without any pay reduction.





the operation, is provided at no cost. Abortion is practised only by specialists in clinics of the national health service.

The second principle is that because every newcomer to this world is considered welcome we do everything in our power to ensure that no woman must renounce the happiness of motherhood for pecuniary reasons or choose between this happiness and satisfaction in her work. The two things should be perfectly compatible with each other.

An allowance of 1,000 marks is granted for each child born to enable parents to meet the obligations involved. Payment of this sum, which is effected by instalments, is linked with regular visits to one of the country's 1,500 pre-natal advice centres so that all expectant mothers are assured of continuous medical supervision and care.

99 per cent of all women in the GDR have their babies in state-sponsored hospitals. Maternal and infant mortality is among the lowest in the world. There exist some 10,000 well-baby clinics to look after all children up to the age of three. Young children are vaccinated against tuberculosis, whooping cough, diphtheria, measles, tetanus, polio and smallpox. All these services are provided free of charge.

The socialist state devotes special attention to working mothers. Maternity leave was extended from 14 to 18 weeks in 1972. During this period women get sick pay equivalent to their average net earnings.

Expectant mothers do not only enjoy full protection from dismissal. It is also provided that their place of work must be adapted to the possibilities and condition of pregnant women. They will always receive their full pay even if the newly assigned job requires less skill.

The GDR has at all times set great store by the construction of kindergartens and crèches so that women with children between the ages of three and six attend a kindergarten. Parents contribute no more than 35 pfennigs a day for the care of their children including a warm meal, fruit and milk. The network of crèches for children under three years of age is also being extended. The proportion of those attending a crèche now stands at 37 per cent. They receive three meals

there each day as well as medical supervision. Parents are charged only 1.40 marks a day, which is less than 13 per cent of the actual cost. 54 per cent of children in classes 1 to 4 attend an after-school centre where they do their homework and engage in sport and games under the supervision of trained personnel.

These figures give the GDR a leading place in the world along with the Soviet Union. And yet the number of places in kindergartens and especially in crèches is inadequate because a growing number of women decide not to give up their jobs even after the birth of several children. For this reason the construction of facilities for children is being stepped up further.

If mothers want to stay at home for a certain period of time after giving birth to a child they may be released from work for up to one year. During this period they remain a member of their firm's staff and their place of work and the rights linked with it are preserved.

Women with three or more children under 16 work shorter hours, i.e. 40 hours a week without any reduction in pay. This is to say that they stop work 45 minutes earlier each day. Their minimum holiday leave has been raised to 21 days or 24 days when they work on a shift basis. Female shift workers with two children also work 40 hours a week and are entitled to a minimum leave of 21 days. More than 500,000 women benefit from this preferential treatment. For over twenty years all working women with a family have been granted a paid day off each month to perform domestic duties.

How are large families supported?

While more children bring more enjoyment to their parents they also put a greater burden on them.

The socialist state gives special consideration to families with many children. In this country there are no low-class neighbourhoods or slums. Our towns are planned by socialist

architects, administered by the state and developed by the community in such a way that children feel at ease there.

The state pays a children's allowance each month which has ranged from 20 to 70 marks since 1969. It amounts to 50 marks for the third child, 60 for the fourth and 70 for any other. This means that a family with five children receives 2,640 marks in addition to their regular earnings each year not counting the tax privileges they are granted.

Enterprises and housing commissions in the neighbourhoods give priority to large families in the assignment of modern flats. They receive rent subsidies and are granted loans by the state if they want to build an owner-occupied home. Standardized projects and building land are provided free of charge. The instalments in which the loan is repaid is not higher than the average rent for a flat. Trade union committees may grant subsidies for the furnishing of homes.

Families with many children are given preferential treatment in the assignment of holiday vouchers. The trade union committees subsidize holiday trips.

What does the community do for unwed mothers?

In the GDR, unwed mothers and their children enjoy the same legal status as married mothers and their children without any qualification. This has been so since 1949 when all laws and provisions placing children born out of wedlock and their mothers at a disadvantage were quashed. The Family Code adopted in 1966 extended this equal status to the law of succession.

But the situation of unwed mothers is not only eased by their equality in legal terms. Since much is particularly difficult for them they are granted special privileges.

When the child of an unwed mother falls ill so that she is forced to stay at home she will receive 90 per cent of her average pay up to the third day. If it is established that the

illness is of a more protracted nature the mother will receive 70 per cent of her average net earnings for four weeks. When two children are affected she will receive 75 per cent for six weeks and payments are higher and longer for every other child.

Should it prove impossible to place the child of an unwed mother immediately in a crèche so that she is compelled to give up her job temporarily she is entitled to a monthly allowance under the social security scheme. For an income of not more than 600 marks the payment represents 70 per cent of the average net earnings in the case of one child, 75 per cent in the case of two and 90 per cent in the exceptional case of five and more children.

In the recent past, so-called "children's hotels" have been established in a number of places. Mothers who are ailing or undergoing sanatorium treatment may leave their children there in charge of trained personnel for a certain period of time.

V.

What is the level of prices, rents and charges?

Wages is a subject we have discussed already. They are rising continuously. But of course wages alone do not tell the reader very much. He must know what can be had for this money. And this does not only apply to food and consumer durables but also to service charges, electricity and gas, railway and bus fares, rents and all sorts of fees.

Stable prices are guaranteed

Price stability was and remains a principle of our socialist state's economic policy. It is possible because the means of production are owned by the people and because production is not subordinated to profit interests. All prices are fixed by the government, mostly by the Price Board operating under the Council of Ministers. The Board exercises tight price control. In this activity it relies on the work of democratic control bodies of the population such as the committees of the local assemblies, the Workers' and Farmers' Inspectorate and the retail shop committees. Violations of price regulations will entail prosecution.

The price policy of the socialist state is determined by social considerations. This means that all vital necessities for the families of wage-earners, salaried employees and farmers must remain cheap. It is with this aim in mind that certain prices and service charges are pegged. Prices

**Development of the per capita consumption
of major foods**

	1950	1965	1973
Meat, kilograms	28.0	58.7	74.0
Butter, kilograms	5.3	12.5	14.1
Milk, litres	74.0	94.1	101.6
Eggs, piece	63.0	211.0	249.0
Vegetables, kilograms	26.5	63.8	99.5
Fruits, kilograms	8.9	46.5	68.8

for a number of non-vital articles and for goods imported from capitalist states for foreign currency are in part still relatively high (e.g. motor cars and coffee).

The price list on page 54 testifies to the stability of prices which have remained unchanged whereas incomes rose by more than 50 per cent.

Price Index of the GDR (1960 = 100)

	1965	1969	1971	1973
Food and kindred products	99.9	100.9	102.3	101.6
Consumer durables	99.8	98.3	96.7	95.9
Rents	100.0	101.1	101.1	101.1
Electricity, gas & water	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Index of service charges and fares	101.8	101.9	102.3	102.6

Price lists for 1960 and 1973

(Foods)	1960	1973
Bread, mixed wheat and rye	1 kg 0.52	0.52
White bread	1 kg 1.00	1.00

Rolls	one	0.05	0.05
Sugar	1 kg	1.64	1.64
Flaked oats	1 kg	0.98	0.98
Semolina	1 kg	1.34	1.34
Potatoes for cellar-storage	50 kg	6.00	8.50
Peas	1 kg	1.04	1.04
Carrots	1 kg	0.37	0.44
Oranges	1 kg	4.00	4.00
Milk, whole	1 litre	0.70	0.70
Standard butter	1 kg	10.00	10.00
Eggs	one	0.37	0.34
Margarine (cheapest sort)	1 kg	2.00	2.00
Cheese (Gouda)	1 kg	7.20	7.20
Pig's lard	1 kg	3.10	3.10
Beef for stewing	1 kg	5.80	5.80
Roast beef	1 kg	9.80	9.80
Pork chop	1 kg	8.00	8.00
Minced meat	1 kg	7.60	7.60
Liver sausage (medium sort)	1 kg	6.20	6.20
Bologna sausage	1 kg	6.80	6.80
Salted herrings	1 kg	1.76	1.76
Tobacco	50 g	3.00	3.00
Brandy	0.7 litre	17.50	22.00
Coffee	100 g	6.00	6.00

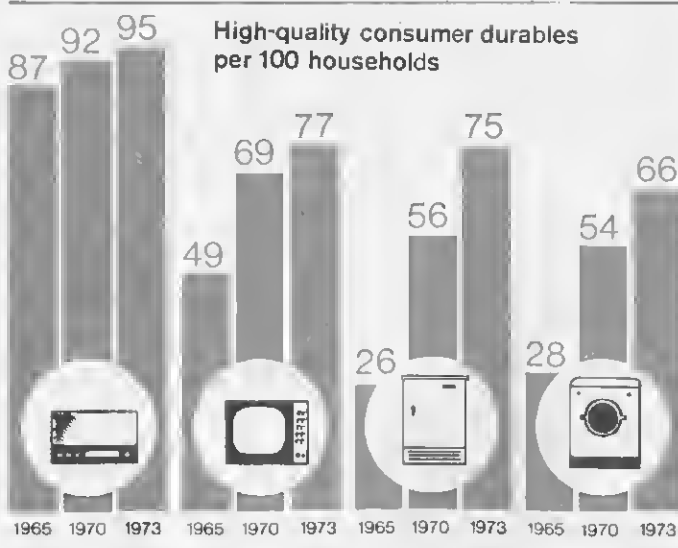
(Consumer durables) 1960 1973

Men's suit 45% wool	218.00	218.00
55% synthetics		
Men's shoes (medium-priced)	42.00	42.00
Ladies' shoes (neat skin)	40.15	40.15
Children's shoes	16.30	16.30
Ladies' stockings (first quality)	11.60	5.20
Bed-linen, linon 1.28 by 2 metres	21.80	21.80

Stew-pot, aluminium		5.00	5.00
Vacuum cleaner (550 W)		235.00	195.00
Men's bicycle		242.00	242.00
Lignite briquettes	50 kg	1.70-3.66	1.70-3.51
Coke	50 kg	4.20	4.20

Rents make up 4 per cent of the family income

Looking at these prices it should be borne in mind that what an average family can afford depends not only—indeed, not even in the first place—on the prices charged for food and consumer durables. The decisive question is what remains of a worker's pay after all the regular expenditure on rent, electricity, gas, heating, fares etc. has been deducted. Another



major factor is what must be spent on the accommodation and education of children, holiday trips and what have you.

In this respect the GDR can point to achievements which can be seen neither in the pay packet nor in show windows and which a visitor cannot buy for himself. For this reason a more superficial comparison of prices is not very instructive. We will return to some of these points later in this brochure.

Let us say here only the following:

An average citizen will buy a television set, which is still comparatively expensive in the GDR, once in eight, ten or even twelve years. But he must pay his rent twelve times each year. And rents are extremely low.

On average, rents make up no more than 4 per cent of the income of a production or office worker's family. Apart from a slight increase in rents for modern flats, which was later annulled for families with low incomes, rents in the GDR have remained unchanged for 25 years. In older houses they are the same as before the war.

The following stipulations uniformly apply to rents in modern flats in the public housebuilding sector:

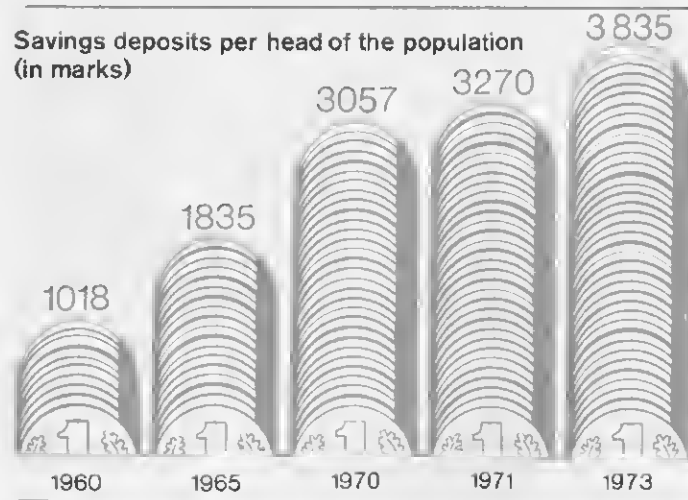
The rent charged in houses built following 1 January 1967 is between 1.00 and 1.25 marks per square metre for the GDR capital and between 80 and 90 pfennigs in the rest of the country. No more than 40 pfennigs per square metre may be charged for central heating per month. Such rents are paid by industrial and office workers, cooperative farmers, members of gardening and fishermen's cooperatives and old-age pensioners provided the monthly gross earnings of the family do not exceed 2,000 marks.

This is to say that a three-room flat with all modern conveniences including heating comes to 123.25 marks a month in Berlin, the country's capital. Elsewhere in the republic the same flat can be had for 97.50 marks.

Building land is public property

The reason why rents are so low is that in the GDR as a socialist country land speculation is ruled out. All housing construction is carried out by nationally-owned enterprises. Fixed prices are in force for building materials. Public ownership of the means of production has at an early stage permitted uniform planning, the development of the prefabricated building method and thus high labour productivity. 90 per cent of all residential buildings are made of prefabricated parts, mostly slabs. The architectural monotony that once marked this economical building technique is now being overcome step by step.

Alongside public housing construction there are also workers' cooperative housebuilding societies (AWG) sponsored by nationally-owned enterprises. They enjoy special support from the state, which makes available interest-free and unlimited credits to meet 85 per cent of the building costs



and supplies the building land at no cost. The remaining 15 per cent is met by members in that they buy interests and lend a hand with their future dwelling. In return, they get their flat sooner and at a particularly low rent. AWG-built flats are to account for some 40 per cent of the total by 1974.

Of course, owner-occupied homes are built as well. Working-class families and families with many children enjoy special support. They are granted loans at extremely low rates of interest and repayment (between 0 and 4 per cent). They need neither pay anything for the building land received, nor are they subject to any real estate tax, and moreover they get all the permits needed free of charge.

At present, one flat is available per 2.8 inhabitants in the GDR (in 1961 the ratio was 1 to 3.0). On average, a dwelling is made up of 2.7 rooms with a total housing space of 57.9 square metres. The trend is away from smaller to bigger flats. But there is still considerable housing stress, which is one of our main preoccupations. To remedy the situation as soon as possible the current Five-Year Plan provides for the construction of 500,000 flats (350,000 were built in the five preceding years). Indications are that the plan will be overfulfilled by a wide margin. The housing shortage will have been ended by 1980.

A tram or bus ride for 20 pfennigs

What has been said here about prices and rents also holds good of charges for electricity and gas, fares, postal rates and other service charges.

With a few exceptions (e.g. postal rates for mail sent abroad) fares and charges are the same as ten or twenty years ago. The state devotes much attention to municipal transport services and subsidizes fares. This is especially for the benefit of the average wage-earner.

The price list below shows that fares have not changed:

(Services)	1960	1973
Railway, weekly commutation ticket (15 km)	2.50	2.50
Railway (50 km), second class	4.00	4.00
Tram	0.20	0.20
Bus	0.20	0.20
Underground	0.20	0.20
S-Bahn (city railway), Berlin, urban area	0.20	0.20
Electricity, 1 kWh (domestic rate)	0.08	0.08
Gas, 1 cubic metre (domestic rate)	0.16	0.16
Resoling, men's shoes	5.77	5.77

(Postal rates)	1960	1973
Letter, local delivery	0.10	0.10
Letter, inland and socialist countries	0.20	0.20
Postcard, inland and socialist countries	0.10	0.10
Registration fee	0.50	0.50
Express fee	0.50	0.50
Air mail fee	0.05	0.05
Money order, 25.01—100.00 marks	0.40	0.40
Telephone, flat-rate	9.00	9.00
Local call	0.15	0.15

How safe are savings deposits?

Since prices in the GDR have in part gone down and mostly remained unchanged in the past 25 years the value of the money has increased. It has, in fact, almost doubled between

Index of the purchasing power of the GDR mark (1960 = 100)

1950	1960	1965	1970	1973
52.7	100.0	99.9	100.1	100.5

1950 and 1970. In the meantime, the purchasing power of the mark has risen further.

For savers in the GDR it is most reassuring to know this. At no time were their savings deposits menaced by inflation. There is no price rise avalanche to eat into their accounts. What they once put by has a higher purchasing power not only because it earns but also because there has been a considerable improvement in the quality of consumer goods while prices have remained stable.

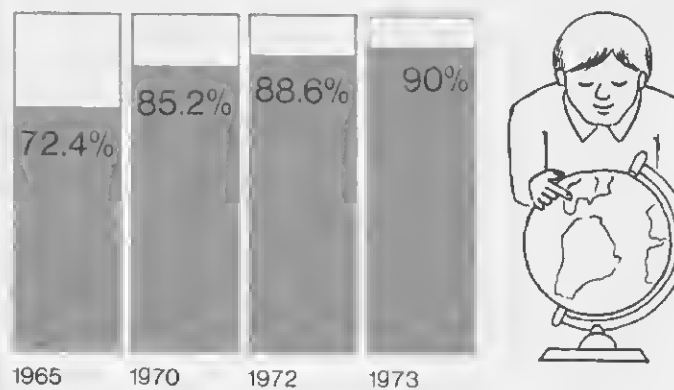
Small wonder, then, that the savings deposits per head of the population continue to rise. Whereas they amounted to 1,000 in 1960 they now stand at 3,835 marks. This, too, is evidence of a growing standard of living.

VI.

How much is spent on education?

The question uppermost in the minds of many mothers and fathers is this one: What will become of our children? What is the place they will find in life? All parents wish their children to learn a great deal, to receive first-class vocational training. Let us ask therefore: What is the cost of education in the GDR? Who has access to higher learning? Are there dead ends in education? What about continuing education?

Proportion of pupils with ten-year schooling



Equal educational opportunities for all

Just like any other socialist country the GDR does not know any educational privileges. Each and everyone has the right and the possibility to acquire a high standard of education in line with his faculties and talents irrespective of his or his parents' social status. Tuition fees are not charged, but rather generous allowances and grants given to students.

The equal right of each citizen to an education guaranteed in the Constitution is implemented through a uniform socialist educational system. All stages of the educational path from kindergarten to university are adapted to each other. The elementary school for the "low classes" and one-room schools have long ceased to exist. Curricula are the same in town and countryside so that all have equal career opportunities. Every pupil learns at least one foreign language.

As a result of socialist school policy 90 per cent of all pupils in the GDR now have at least ten years of schooling. Attendance at a ten-year general polytechnical school has been compulsory since 1965. The most proficient among the pupils get full secondary education afterwards and take their *Abitur* (college entrance qualification) at the end of the 12th form. 49 per cent of all school students are children of workers and farmers.

There are 86 college students and 96 technical college students in the GDR per 10,000 population. More than 40 per cent of those attending full-time courses are sons and daughters of production workers, 7 per cent of cooperative farmers and 24 per cent of office workers.

Free study at school and university

No tuition fees are charged in the GDR. This applies to general polytechnical schools as well as to 12-year schools. Teaching materials are provided at no cost. Allowances are paid when needed from the 9th form onwards.

School lunches are supplied everywhere at 55 pfennigs a day. This makes things easier for working mothers. The number of those having lunch at school increased from 700,000 to 1.6 million between 1967 and 1973 as a result of systematic improvements. The state spends 500 million marks for this purpose each year.

Children may attend after-school centres where more than half of all pupils in classes 1 to 4 are committed to the care of trained personnel who help them do their homework. To know that their children are well looked after there at no cost is especially important for parents out at work.

In a move to give children in rural areas an education of the same standard as those in urban areas a dense network of central schools easily accessible to all was set up many years ago. Boarding schools have been established to facilitate attendance at 12-year secondary schools and special schools (with more emphasis on languages, music, sport or natural science). Students get full board and lodging there for between 42 and 48 marks a month.

Higher and specialized education, too, depends solely on proficiency with parents' income playing no role at all. Study is free for all students. No tuition fees are charged.

The state pays grants to 85 per cent of the student population. The basic grant is 190 marks. Grants of up to 450 marks are awarded for superior scholarship. Special regulations are in force for those who have already entered an occupation and are selected for university study by their employing firm. This also applies to married and unmarried female students with a child. Since August 1968 students whose parents earn between 1,200 and 1,500 marks a month have received what is known as 'partial grants' of 110 marks. The level of parents' income entitling students to a grant is higher in the case of families with several children.

Medical care is free for all students. They need not pay any insurance premiums. When put on the sick-list they continue to receive their full grant for six weeks. From the 7th to the 26th week or when treated in a hospital or sanatorium they get 50 per cent of their usual grant.

A place in a students' hostel comes to 10 marks a month. All this means that in a socialist state the education of children affects the family budget only to a slight degree.

What do schools prepare pupils for?

The educational system of the GDR imparts a modern and scientific general education. It enables young people to think independently and take part in running the country's affairs. Its central idea is to awaken and promote all talents and abilities needed for a meaningful life, a vocational training of a high standard, and the mastery of the scientific and technological revolution for the benefit of the whole community.

Firstly, pupils receive ten years of schooling without any exception. One-teacher-per-subject instruction prevails from the first class. Children are not taught arithmetic but "mathematics". For many years now there has been special emphasis on mathematics and natural science subjects. This is a great achievement of the socialist educational system all the more so as it does not imply any neglect of the social sciences, languages, music, the arts and sport. All pupils learn one foreign language (10 per cent of them from the 3rd class onwards) and most of them a second one. Those receiving full secondary education are singled out only in the 10th form, i.e. at a time when special gifts of a pupil are clearly discernible.

Secondly, all pupils receive polytechnical instruction to gain fundamental insights into modern technology, production and economics as well as into human relations in the production process. Pupils in the lower grades acquire elementary technical knowledge and skills in industrial arts lessons.

Classes 7 to 10 have three or five hours of practical instruction each week in training shops of nationally-owned enterprises and cooperative farms or in special polytechnical centres. The theoretical subject "Introduction into socialist production" is to give pupils a grasp of the basic facts of socialist production. In the 11th and 12th form this polytech-

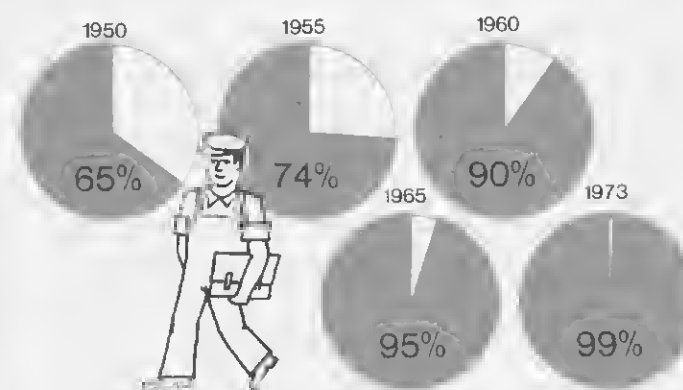
nical instruction is continued with practical scientific work in socialist enterprises. It is quite obvious that such a varied, scientific and practice-related training provides a good starting point for one's future career.

A factor contributing to high teaching standards is the low number of pupils per class. The average figure is 26.3 in 10-year schools and 24 in 12-year schools. One full-time teacher is available per 18 pupils.

Anybody having completed school education is free to choose any occupation. Today, 99 per cent of all school-leavers begin vocational training or enter college. Under the Constitution every young person has the right and the duty to learn a trade or profession. Most boys and girls receive vocational training in large nationally-owned factories on the basis of modern curricula. Factory-operated vocational schools comprise training shops, classrooms and apprentices' hostels. In line with present-day needs theoretical instruction is considered especially important. The ratio between practical and theoretical training is 1 to 1.5.

As a rule, an apprenticeship lasts two years. Upon its com-

School-leavers starting vocational training



pletion trainees obtain a skilled worker's certificate in one of 28 newly created 'basic occupations' allowing for much specialization or in one of 301 "traditional" occupations.

Preoccupation with educational content?

Finally, it should be noted that parents need not worry about the content of the education imparted.

It is a matter of course for a socialist school to inculcate in children a sense of humanity and respect for all nations. From the outset curricula, textbooks and teachers make sure that children are educated in the spirit of socialist internationalism, and the active championing of peace, antifascist solidarity and democratic responsibility.

Apart from equal opportunity for all socialist educational policy offers the advantages that it allows people to become aware of their own role in production and society and teaches them to understand the laws underlying social development. In this way it helps every young person to become master of his own destiny. It does not produce any narrow-gauged specialists. Rather, it imparts to him the scientific world outlook of Marxism-Leninism and enables him to choose his ideals, his convictions and his attitudes in accordance with social progress, with the historic mission of the working class.

What about continuing education?

We have said before that there are no dead ends in the educational system of the GDR. Even after completing schooling, vocational training or study people have a wide range of options open to them if they want to find more satisfaction in their work, assume a larger measure of responsibility or attain a higher standard of living by improving their professional skill. In the GDR adult education is controlled by the state. It does not imply high costs or any risks.

There exists a vast network of adult education institutes. In

1972-73 226,844 citizens attended classes there. Most of them want to obtain a certificate for 10 or 12 years of schooling or take part in foreign language courses.

In socialist enterprises of industry and agriculture continuing education is chiefly provided by so-called factory and village academies which organize a wide range of courses in technical subjects. They award skilled worker's, supervisory worker's or other certificates.

In 1972 alone 65,449 employees from industry, the building trade, transport, posts and telecommunications, among them 30,215 women, obtained a skilled worker's certificate after attending further training courses. 34,170 employees successfully passed a supervisory worker's examination among them almost 4,000 women. In addition, more than 30,000 members of cooperative and state farms won their qualification as farm technician, cattle-breeder or specialist in soil improvement.

Correspondence courses organized by institutes of higher and specialized education and considered the equivalent to full-time courses have been widely practised in the GDR for many years. Enterprises grant their employees time off for study and seminars while continuing to give them their full pay. In many cases they meet all the costs incurred. In 1973, almost 40,000 employees were engaged in extra-mural studies at colleges and universities and almost 68,000 at technical colleges.

To sum up the situation we may say that the exemplary and far-reaching educational opportunities offered by the socialist state with enormous sums of money involved are an essential component of working people's high standard of living.

VII.

Who has access to art and culture?

It is often said that man does "not live of bread alone". And indeed, for people to live a truly decent life they must have every opportunity to assimilate the cultural and spiritual treasures of their own people and those of all other nations in the world. How do things stand in the GDR in this respect?

Art for the people

Let us first give an example:

More than 655,000 people went to see the GDR's 7th Fine Arts Exhibition which was held in Dresden at the turn between 1972 and 1973. This is a remarkable figure as everyone will readily admit. What is the reason behind this widespread interest in culture and art? The reason is that socialism has created the conditions for all to lead an intellectually rewarding life giving culture its due place.

Firstly, the fact that socialism has freed the working people from exploitation, from the need to fight for their livelihood, from the burden of social insecurity enables them to confine themselves no longer to eking out a living. Social security provides a good climate for cultural pursuits. (And a workers' state builds houses of culture and educational institutions and guarantees low admission fees).

Secondly, the working class, which runs the state and the economy, acquires knowledge and improves it, attends courses and pursues studies, develops new needs. Even now there

are many who want more than their daily bread, a washing machine, a car and a refrigerator. They see culture as a source of enlightenment, spiritual enrichment and strength.

Thirdly, socialist realism in art is capable of satisfying these demands. Its best works are noted for their clear message and wide appeal which does not mean that they are shallow or narrow in outlook. Socialist realism is varied in its forms and tends to gain in originality.

The great humanist ideal of art for the people is thus becoming reality under socialism. Socialism is more than social security and high living standards, it implies a high level of education and culture, the development of the intellectual potentialities of each, the full realization of people's individuality.

At present, one citizen out of four is a regular reader at a public lending library. Clubs and houses of culture attract 35 million visitors each year and the number of theatre-goers exceeds 12 million. The playgoing public has remained much the same over the past ten years although twice as much people have television and the TV networks have doubled their broadcasting time during this period. Theatre companies and orchestras in the GDR are not dissolved for financial reasons. More than two million citizens attend concerts each year. The viewing public of museums increased from 15 million to 25.2 million between 1965 and 1973.

Culture on the shop floor

Under socialism, factories are not only centres of production. And workers are not merely producers. Culture is firmly established in nationally-owned enterprises. Not only as far as aesthetic questions and human behaviour are concerned. As a matter of fact, art and culture figure prominently in the activities of enterprises, work crews and the trade unions, in their plans and agreements.

Many socialist work crews were to be found among those who went to see the national fine arts exhibition and the

preceding exhibitions in the country's 15 counties. The search for new cultural experience and the acquaintance with art is one aspect of the socialist emulation movement in factories and offices.

Nowadays, high production results and initiatives for plan fulfilment are not the only thing that counts. It is also taken into account what brigade members do in terms of public work, how they improve their knowledge and develop their cultural interests. Economic performances and cultural activities are increasingly regarded as two sides of a coin. For example, 40,000 employees of enterprises in Dresden hold season tickets entitling them to visit the arts collections there at any time of the year.

Socialist enterprises support cultural pursuits by making available considerable sums. Part of the profits are used to finance education, culture and sport. In addition to the 1,400 million marks allocated to cultural purposes in the 1973 national budget enterprises contributed another 200 million.

Enterprises also subsidize theatre attendance, and maintain painting and drawing circles, choirs, orchestras, amateur film studios and folk-dance groups. Festivals are organized to allow all talents to unfold and to arouse interest in cultural matters.

220,428 trade union officials for cultural affairs have done much to give the workers cultural and artistic experiences and to encourage them to read good books. There is a trade union-run library in almost all enterprises. The country's 5,293 trade union libraries have more than seven million volumes and a readership of just under one million. On average, each of them borrowed one book each month in 1973.

What about admission fees?

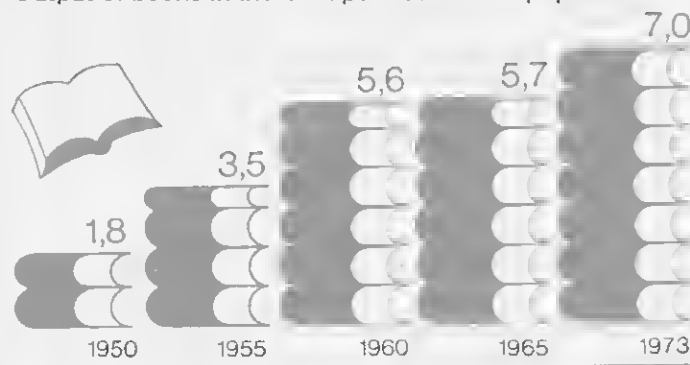
Because of generous support from the state attendance at theatre, concert and cinema performances as well as first-class books and gramophone records are inexpensive and thus within the means of working-class families. A stereo LP

record of classical music costs 12.10 marks. Or let us take a look at the theatre. Felsenstein's "Komische Oper" in Berlin is ranked among the world's leading opera companies. The "Berliner Ensemble" founded by Bertolt Brecht is also known throughout the world. And still, everyone can afford to attend performances there or at other stages. They are by no means "exclusive". The most expensive ticket comes to 12 marks in theatres and to 15 marks in opera houses. Average admission fees are 3.46 marks for drama, 5.02 marks for opera and operetta and 1.55 marks for performances at children's theatres which are notable for their repertoire and artistic standards.

Tickets for cinema shows cost between 1.20 and 2.50 marks in the big cities. Children and pensioners pay half of this sum.

In 1973 there were already 710 theatre attendances per 1,000 inhabitants. Berlin's Maxim Gorky Theatre managed to double the proportion of workers among its audiences. A great many production workers take part in regular workshops. All theatre companies and many actors maintain close ties with work crews to familiarize them with dramatic art and study their problems.

Output of books in the GDR per head of the population



What is the price of good books?

The output of books also testifies to high cultural standards. With just under seven copies produced per head of the population the GDR leads the world along with the Soviet Union. More than 5,330 titles with a total edition of 119.7 million copies were produced in 1973.

Books are inexpensive in the GDR. Valuable works of fiction are available in the price range from 2 to 12 marks. With 23,000 the average number of copies is quite high. There are no tiny editions of valuable literature nor a flood of shilling shockers. GDR citizens are voracious readers so that particularly intriguing contemporary novels are quickly sold out although produced in large numbers.

The interest which people in this country take in literary creation is reflected not only in the broad public discussion of new works. It can also be seen from the fact that 26 per cent of the GDR population are readers in public and trade union libraries (the figure in 1965 was 21 per cent). Convincing proof is also provided by the publication in millions of copies of books dealing with questions of the recent past and with human problems arising from socialist construction.

Warmongering, chauvinism and racism are prohibited by law and are therefore not allowed to leave their mark on any publication. Trash and bad taste are criticized in public. What is more, inferior and demoralizing products have no chance of getting published or becoming a success because cultural policy is inspired by lofty ethical and esthetic ideals and works of art are not a subject of profit-making.

An inquiry conducted in Halle and Leipzig counties revealed that 92 per cent of all households in town and country own good books.

Who may engage in cultural pursuits?

Everyone may do so. As a matter of fact, the socialist state goes to great lengths to arouse the interest of as many people

as possible in such activities. It is now quite common for members of all occupations to engage in cultural pursuits after working hours. They are not just consumers of culture but do creative work in their leisure-time.

Hundreds of thousands of workers, cooperative farmers, engineers, scientists and scholars are active in amateur working groups run by 1,000 clubs and houses of culture as well as many factory clubs where they receive expert guidance from artists and specialists. What has been achieved in this field to make culture in the GDR the affair of the whole people is reflected at the workers' festivals and at contests for "young talent".

The vast opportunities available for artistic activities are evidenced by the existence of 6,000-odd choirs and vocal groups, 3,500 amateur dramatic societies and satirical groups, some 100 symphony and chamber orchestras, 93 workers' and farmers' theatres and 300 groups of „worker-authors" open to all with literary and journalistic inclinations.

Of course, there are still differences in the educational standards of workers, cooperative farmers, intellectuals, and other social strata in the German Democratic Republic. The effects of the capitalist past are still felt. It would be exaggerated to say that all people seek artistic experience. But the majority of the working people are developing a rich intellectual and cultural life that both affords them pleasure and stimulates their minds. They do so at their place of work and in their leisure time.

Literature and art enrich the lives of people in our socialist society as an expression of their high standard of living.

VIII.

What is being done for people's health?

A factor assuming extraordinary importance for the living standards of workers—manual or otherwise—is the preservation of their health and the provision of medical care and material maintenance in the event of illness.

An integrated system of social insurance

In the GDR there exists an integrated system of social insurance. There are no second- or third-class insurants, no insurance schemas for the well-to-do and the poor, no drugs that a doctor may not prescribe or only in small quantities because of the costs involved, and there are no prescription charges.

People in this country have to pay not a single pfennig for check-ups, treatment or surgical operation, however complicated. Doctors, hospitals and institutes are open to all.

All gainfully employed persons are subject to compulsory insurance. Irrespective of their social status they and their dependants are entitled to social service benefits in the event of disease, disability, maternity, old age and death. Wage-earners and salaried employees (including apprentices and students) are covered by the trade union-sponsored social security system for factory and office workers whereas self-employed persons and members of cooperatives come under the State Insurance Company of the GDR.

Contributions have remained unchanged since 1947. Workers pay ten per cent of their gross wages under combined sickness and retirement pension schemes with the employing firm paying the same amount. Contributions are paid only to a limit of 600 marks so that 60 marks is the maximum amount. Insurance coverage is also provided for non-working family members.

This is to say that a skilled worker earning 900 or 1,000 marks pays a total of 60 marks in contributions to social insurance and retirement pension schemes. If he is taken ill this guarantees him 90 per cent of his net wages for six weeks. Afterwards, he will receive at least 50 per cent of his net wages in sick pay. If he has children, the percentage is gradually increased to a maximum of 90 per cent for five children.

Those earning less than 600 marks get at least 70 per cent sick pay even after the first six weeks until the day their working capacity is restored or until the 78th week. For those with children the amount will be increased accordingly with 90 per cent as the maximum.

For a number of years a voluntary pension scheme has been added to compulsory insurance. Under this scheme employees earning more than 600 marks qualify for higher pensions and higher sick pay between 70 and 90 per cent until their working capacity has been restored or up to the 78th week by paying supplementary contributions in line with their higher income.

How are sick persons cared for?

In the event of illness all patients will receive any medical care they need regardless of their pecuniary circumstances. The health service is organized in such a way that medical aid can be provided as near as possible to a patient's place of work or residence.

In the GDR there are 608 hospitals with almost 186,000 beds, or 110 beds per 10,000 population.

The number of doctors has risen considerably in recent

years. In 1973 one doctor was available for every 580 inhabitants.

Apart from hospitals there are also 490 health centres and 879 outpatient departments, thousands of small outpatient units, national health and private practices, dental practices, first-aid posts staffed with doctors or nurses, visiting nurses, denominational nursing institutions, tuberculosis and tumour centres etc.

Other facilities include modern centres for cardiovascular diseases and special hospitals for complicated diseases. To save the lives of patients in the event of severe renal insufficiency over 100 kidneys have been successfully transplanted in the country's 30 renal centres.

Needless to say, medical attention in all these establishments is provided free of charge and patients may freely choose among them and among the doctors. There are no "fashionable" doctors whose services are only within the means of the well-to-do.



What is a health centre?

One of the foundations of the national health service in the GDR is the network of health centres that has been systematically established from the early days on the strength of Soviet experience.

Health centres are institutions in which state-employed medical specialists hold consultations and which include, apart from medical and dental surgeries, a diagnostic laboratory, an X-ray department, a pharmacy and often also a physiotherapy and hydrotherapy department.

Health centres offer the advantage that several specialists may be consulted and several examinations carried out without waste of time. Mostly, they are equipped with apparatus which it would be uneconomical for an individual doctor to operate. Moreover, surgeons and internists, gynaecologists and pediatricians may all closely cooperate for treatment in a health centre. Preventive care can be administered continuously.

As things stand now, health centres are set up along with shopping centres, schools and kindergartens when new residential areas are created. Their number is now almost three times as high as in 1949. As they are much-frequented the point now is to cut down on waiting periods where this is still necessary and to make the patient-recall system as time-saving as possible.

About 600 dentists will be trained until 1975 to overcome the subsisting shortage in this field.

It should also be noted that all complicated diagnostic examinations made for prophylactic reasons are free of charge. Neither hospitals nor diagnosis centres are seen as profitable investment projects. No one is allowed to make a profit out of other people's poor health. This is one of the advantages offered by a socialist-type health service.

What does the industrial health service look like?

The industrial health service is a component part of the socialist health service and considered a special achievement of the working class.

Taken all in all, there are over 3,700 industrial health facilities in the GDR including 102 health centres, 267 outpatient units, 2,086 first-aid posts with a doctor in charge and another 1,251 staffed with nurses. In 1950 the figure was as low as 414. These establishments do not come under the works manager but they help him act up to his responsibility for health protection and safety at work as stipulated in the Labour Code. Factory doctors and specialists in industrial hygiene regularly carry out preventive examinations, submit proposals for the arrangement of work places and engage in other activities. It is an advantage for the workers that they may see the doctor in their factory as he knows them and their working conditions and can thus institute the treatment best suited to an individual case. Factory doctors not only have the right to examine patients as to their working capacity or state of health but provide full treatment including preventive measures.

Altogether, 56.5 per cent of the GDR's population is covered by the industrial health service.

What about rural areas?

It has always been the aim of socialist health policy to give the rural population medical care of the same standard as those living in urban areas.

Facilities set up in the countryside over the past 20 years include 388 outpatient clinics, 4,957 visiting nurses' stations and hundreds of national health practices (medical and dental).

There are 83 mobile dental stations and well-equipped trav-



Paintings on the pavement. Especially on national holidays children can give full play to their imagination in this way. They have an accurate and original way of looking at the world around them. Shown on the right is a painting by 8-year-old Birgitt Müller from Schwedt.





Close tie of friendship link students from the GDR and the Soviet Union. Evelin, Victoria, Raymonde and Rita all study German language in Leipzig, arrange parties together and indulge in memories of their joint trip to Kiev.



Youth and leisure. New discotheques and youth clubs spring up everywhere to give young people more opportunities to follow their inclinations. Dancing is always a favourite even here on a camping site in Schwerin.

Gliding has also become a hobby for girls. The Sports and Technical Organization offers them excellent facilities at little cost.



Comfortable holiday homes. The 'Panorama' interhotel at Oberhof is among those used by the trade unions for holidays of working-class families. Holiday vouchers are often financed by enterprises in recognition of services rendered. The trade unions also operate homes of their own. Shown on our picture are the Ewerts and Kleine families at the new trade union home in Waldau (below).



Recreation in Wörlitzer Park. Much is being done to make it possible for citizens to find relaxation in the surroundings of towns and cities.

About one million trips abroad are arranged by the travel agency each year and this number continues to rise. Leningrad and the nearby Petrodvorets with its famous fountains are among the destinations attracting tourists from the GDR.





Cultural pursuits are increasingly becoming a genuinely felt need of people. Wolfgang Hauswald, a machine builder, chose a view of Dresden's Prager Strasse as the motif for a painting he executed in the Bannewitz art circle.

A library coming into the factory. The employees of the grey iron casting department at the nationally-owned 'Veritas' sewing machine plant receive books requested directly on the shop floor.



Autograph hunters have their books signed by the world-famous Soviet author Konstantin Simonov. His gripping World War Two novels continue to head the bestseller lists in the GDR.

Art for the people. 650,000 visitors, among them many production teams, went to see the VIIIth Fine Arts Exhibition in Dresden. 'Angela', a wooden sculpture by Manfred Salow was one of the 2,000 works displayed.





Music and the arts figure prominently in education. The average age of the members of this string orchestra is 14 years. They are shown here during a concert for pupils in the Gobelin Hall of Dresden's Picture-Gallery (above). Boys and girls from Berlin schools sketching ancient sculptures from the original in the Pergamum Museum (below)



elling X-ray units to improve medical standards even in the most remote places of the country.

Members of cooperative farms have the same rights and duties in terms of insurance coverage as other employees.

What is being done to prevent disease?

In line with the principle "prevention is better than cure" the GDR has for many years spent considerable sums on preventive medicine.

Every citizen over 12 years of age has his chest X-rayed once in two years to permit the early detection of tuberculosis and cancer of the bronchi.

All women may take part in mass screenings to detect cancer of the womb and other neoplasms at an early stage. There are also mass examinations to establish cases of diabetes. For example, one such campaign in 1971 led to 45,000 diabetics being discovered and treated.

Compulsory vaccination schemes to prevent communicable diseases include immunization against smallpox, tuberculosis, polio, tetanus, diphtheria, measles and whooping cough in infants.

The State Hygiene Inspectorate and its voluntary aids supervise the observance of numerous sanitary regulations concerning the quality of drinking water, the purity of the air, the handling of food and the organization of the work environment.

Preventive measures have also been introduced against caries. In many places the drinking water is fluorinated, which has proved much more effective than external application by toothpaste.

What is the cost of spa and sanatorium treatment?

If necessary, any patient may undergo free spa or sanatorium treatment within the country or abroad. The treatment may be prophylactic, curative or convalescent. There are special commissions in enterprises and district trade union organizations to deal with applications after joint proposals have been made by shop trade union committees and doctors. Of 226,000 cures prescribed in 1973 110,000 were to prevent disease.

In 1973 the number of spas and sanatoria was 172. Factory and office workers make up 80 per cent of those sent to health resorts for treatment. In recent years the number of cures has been increased as has the proportion of production workers, shift workers and women with children in the distribution of health resort places at home and abroad. The rights of the trade union commissions concerned have been expanded.

Decline in infant mortality per 100 births



How healthy are people in the GDR?

High sanitary and medical standards have led to a continuous decline in the incidence of disease per 100 inhabitants, which chiefly applies to what were once the most widespread and dangerous infectious diseases. The fact that they have been eradicated is evidence of a general high standard of living.

In 1955 there were still 50.4 new cases of tuberculosis and 7.8 deaths per 10,000 population. By 1965 this figure had dropped to 9.4 new cases and about one death per 10,000 population. Five years later only six new cases were registered. Children no longer die of tuberculosis. Many sanatoria for tubercular cases have been reequipped to provide other services.

After the establishment of 150 advice centres for rheumatic patients the relapse rate of this disease declined from 40 per cent to 1 per cent.

Formidable infectious diseases such as diphtheria, polio or measles have virtually been stamped out (e.g. polio since 1961) or largely contained through comprehensive preventive measures and immunization schemes.

For a number of years now mothers need no longer fear an often fatal Rh incompatibility in her baby. Preventive examinations of all pregnant women and the use of a new serum eliminate the risks of the Rh factor for mother and child. A network of 126 immunization centres has been established.

Infant mortality was reduced from 3.9 cases per 100 live births in 1960 to 1.6 in 1973. This is a result which places the GDR among the leading nations in this field.

All this has positive implications for social security and a happy family life although many problems remain, notably the reduction of cardiovascular diseases and the successful struggle against cancer. The socialist state concentrates much of its efforts and resources on these.

IX.

What does a family holiday cost?

Another aspect of the standard of living is the following: What opportunities are there for an average workers' family with children to spend their holidays at little cost in some picturesque area, on the seaside or in the mountains? What is being done by the state and the community for this?

Statistics show that more than 50 per cent of all citizens spend their holidays away from their homes. The number of holiday trips grows by between 4 and 7 per cent each year. The number of those spending their vacation on the Baltic went up from one million in 1960 to almost two million in 1973.

Trade union holiday service

The main reason behind this is that like in the Soviet Union and elsewhere in the socialist community the bulk of all holiday homes are owned by the trade unions. The Confederation of Free German Trade Unions (FDGB) has operated its own holiday service since 1974. Over and above this, there are many holiday homes and bungalow colonies run by nationally-owned enterprises and producers' cooperatives. Exclusive health resorts for the *dolce far niente* of the well-to-do are something unknown in this country.

Many trade union homes have been established in former palaces and villas. Others have been constructed since the GDR was founded, among them twelve modern vacationists'

colonies of the FDGB. The trade unions have also concluded contracts with private persons under which they provide accommodation for holiday-makers.

The fact that the holiday homes are owned and subsidized by the trade unions and nationally-owned enterprises makes holiday trips very cheap. Prices are staggered according to income, season, and comfort. Trade union members are charged between 52.50 and 120 marks for a 13-day stay with full board. For children accompanying their parents the rate for 13 days with full board is fixed at 30 marks.

This means that a working-class family with two children pays between 200 and 300 marks for a two-week holiday. There is also a 33 per cent reduction in fares for the trip.

In 1973 the holiday service of the trade unions arranged over 1,300,000 such trips. Some 800,000 employees can make use of factory-owned holiday homes and bungalows on similar terms each year.

Workers have priority

After the Eighth SED Congress the Council of Ministers (Government) and the trade unions agreed to expand the trade union holiday service still further. Existing homes are to be enlarged and new ones constructed. Catering facilities and furnishing are being improved. Production workers and families with many children are given even more consideration.

A first move was that in 1972 80 per cent of three of the country's finest and biggest interhotels were made available to the trade unions' holiday service. As a rule, outstanding workers and their families are chosen for a stay at one of these comfortable hotels in Oberhof, Dresden and Warnemünde in recognition of their services.

In 1974 the number of FDGB holiday-makers will increase further. Almost double the amount of places in holiday homes will be offered to large families as compared with the previous

year. The shop trade union committees often grant them special price reductions.

Plans are for new FDGB homes with a total of 8,500 beds to be completed until 1975. This will bring the number of places available to more than 2.2 million. Modern buildings have already come into existence in the seaside resort of Binz on Rügen Island, and in the winter health resorts of Oberwiesenthal and Oberhof. An indoor swimming pool with sea water has been opened for the winter season at Kühlungsborn.

Holidays arranged by the travel agency

GDR citizens also have other opportunities when they want to go on a holiday. In 1973 the *Reisebüro* (travel agency) made available holiday places for about 200,000 persons in the beauty spots of the country. Week-end and special trips were arranged for just under 3.7 million people.

Finally, there exist 530 well-equipped municipal camping sites, which were used by 1.7 million holiday-makers in 1973. Places there are distributed at a nominal charge at central or regional level beginning in January. On the Baltic coast they are insufficient in July and August although capacities are being increased all the time. Places elsewhere, especially on the shores of lakes and in the highlands, are however mostly available.

Trips to neighbouring countries

Tourist trips into our neighbouring socialist countries have seen a remarkable development in the last three years as no passports and visas are needed any longer. In 1973 more than 5.2 million GDR citizens visited the Polish People's Republic and 4.2 million travelled to the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. More than 1.6 million cars and motor coaches were registered. Conversely, almost eight million Poles and Czechoslovaks visited the German Democratic Republic.

Apart from these private trips into the neighbouring countries the GDR's *Reisebüro* has arranged journeys into all socialist states for twenty years now. The Soviet Union and Bulgaria are the chief destinations.

Trips abroad including a stay in first-class hotels with all modern conveniences are of course relatively expensive. This notwithstanding, the number of GDR citizens travelling to the Black Sea, the Adriatic, the Tatra Mountains or the Caucasus through the agency of the *Reisebüro* rose from 215,500 in 1962 to almost one million in 1973.

It should be added that trips for young persons into famous resorts and cities of the socialist countries are offered at much lower prices.

In socialist countries it is a common practice to recognize workers' services to the community by organizing trips abroad for them. After harvest-time in 1973 2,000 cooperative farmers travelled to the Soviet Union in special trains and charter planes.

Happy holidays for all children

Some 650,000 children find recreation each year in the well-appointed holiday camps and homes of enterprises. Located in picturesque surroundings they are provided with sports equipment, playing grounds, libraries and many other facilities. Parents are charged no more than 18 marks for a three-week stay there. The cost is almost completely met by the employing firm and the FDGB. This also applies to the supervising staff. Another 110,000 children spent happy holidays in 1973 along with friends from 30 countries in central Pioneer camps.

Those who do not go to a holiday camp for several weeks may take part in local organized holiday activities in schools, Pioneer houses, Pioneer parks, open-air baths and sports centres. Here again, the charge is only nominal.

Summing up we may say that parents need not have any worries about where their children stay during the two-month

vacation and what they occupy themselves with. The whole community feels responsible for this, notably the works managements, the trade unions, the youth organization, and the teachers.

And here is something else we want to tell you: The country's 280 youth hostels and hiking quarters provided 1.4 million overnight stays in 1973. Young persons, students and pupils were charged 25 pfennigs and adults 50 pfennigs per night.

X.

What opportunities are there for young people?

More than five and a half million citizens in the GDR are under 21 years of age. They make up roughly one-third of the population. More than 2.8 million, or one in six, are aged between 14 and 25.

What opportunities are there for young people in a socialist state? How do they live? What rights do they have? Are they placed at a disadvantage or do they enjoy special promotion? This, too, is an aspect of the standard of living.

We said a few things about this matter in the section on education and holiday activities. But much remains to be said.

What are their basic rights?

The party of the working class and the workers' and farmers' government have always been guided by the consideration that youth should enjoy confidence, responsibility and every conceivable support.

The GDR has consistently put into practice the four basic rights which the First Congress of the Free German Youth (FDJ) proclaimed in Brandenburg at Whitsun 1946 as the young generation's programme of action for the reorganization of public life: the fundamental political rights, the right to work and recreation, the right to education and the right to joy and happiness.

As things stand now, the rising generation is an equal,

attentive, responsible and critical partner in the construction of an advanced socialist society. All the roads to high educational standards, creative work and a meaningful life are open to it. Equal pay for equal work irrespective of age and prolonged holidays for young persons were introduced on 8 February 1950. There are no educational barriers, no exploitation of apprentices and no fear of losing one's job. Everything is being done to enable each and everyone to unfold all his talents and abilities, his initiative and individuality for his own benefit and for the welfare of society at large.

This is the main content of the new Youth Act adopted by the People's Chamber (Parliament) on 28 January 1974 as the third such law in the republic's history. It tends to give young people still broader responsibilities, rights and possibilities in the socialist state and contains unequivocal stipulations binding upon all executives in public and economic life.

Under the new Youth Act the holiday leave and pay for apprentices have been increased as of 1 March 1974. The charge for full board and lodging in an apprentices' hostel has been reduced to a uniform 33 marks month.

How old must a deputy be?

Just as in the other socialist states the young generation has a real share in exercising political power and running the economy at all levels. No legislation and no measure is adopted without youth and their elected representatives playing their part.

Any citizen aged 18 and over is entitled to vote at any election. At 18 he may also be elected to serve on any of the local assemblies.

The voting age was fixed at 18 years already in the first Constitution of the GDR promulgated 25 years ago when such a move was not even discussed in the capitalist world. The socialist Constitution adopted on 6 April 1968 then reduced the age at which a person might be elected to hold office from

21 to 18 years. This applies to all representative bodies with the sole exception of Parliament.

Today, 42,000 young persons between 18 and 30 years of age serve as elected representatives of the people. They make up 20 per cent of all deputies. 22,555 of them are in the 18-25 age group. Sixty-one representatives of the young generation have been elected as members of the People's Chamber, the republic's supreme law-making body.

What is the role of the youth organization

In the GDR there operates a socialist youth organization, the Free German Youth. It unites young people from all walks of life on a voluntary basis. As spokesman for the up-and-coming generation it considers its task to be to give young people advice and practical aid to help them solve their complicated problems in these giddy-paced times. Its aim is to reach all, to rally them all to its side and to leave no one behind in the construction of an advanced socialist society.

The FDJ has a membership of 1.9 million. This is more than 60 per cent of all young people. All FDJ committees are democratically elected from the bottom upwards. The existence of a united socialist youth organization largely explains why the vital interests of youth in the GDR are represented so effectively.

The youth organization has a group of its own in all assemblies and in Parliament. The FDJ holds 40 seats in the People's Chamber and a total of 16,787 seats in the local assemblies. So the young generation is well represented in any case irrespective of how many young candidates are nominated by the other parties and organizations on the joint list of the National Front.

Their voice is always heard

The heads of all institutions of government, enterprises and combines, cooperative and state farms, schools and colleges, scientific institutes and organizations are legally bound—and have indeed made it their standard practice—to consult at regular intervals with the committees of the FDJ and to hear the representatives of the young generation in preparing for decisions.

In enterprises, universities and schools the FDJ operates its own branches. These enjoy far-reaching rights and their members cooperate in governing bodies and advisory councils. It depends on their activity to what extent the interests and opinions of youth are allowed to carry their due weight.

The FDJ has a publishing house of its own. In addition to many periodicals, magazines and books it publishes a daily newspaper, the *Junge Welt*, which helps young people represent their interests and has a circulation exceeding 700,000 copies.

To enable young people to take part in running the country's affairs with a large measure of competence the FDJ is engaged in intense work to spread the scientific world outlook of Marxism-Leninism. It runs a youth college and schools at regional level. Marxist education classes are organized by the FDJ each year. In 1973 more than 1.3 million young people attended these classes in 63,800 groups to study Marxism-Leninism.

High political and professional standards make it possible for GDR youth to shape their lives consciously and freely in accordance with the overall interests of society.

What is a youth project?

Young people seek responsibility. They do not want to be ordered about but to solve complicated problems on their own. This is essential for the development of their individuality.

In the GDR it is customary for young people in socialist enterprises, cooperatives and institutes to be placed in charge of entire departments, building sectors, shops or research projects with clearly defined tasks. This is what we call *youth projects*. Mostly, these are economic key projects calling for a high degree of knowledge and professional skill. Team work adds to the potentialities of the individual as he derives more satisfaction from his own contribution and from joint success. Altogether, there were over 59,000 youth projects involving 747,185 young people in the GDR in 1973.

In production enterprises there also exist *youth brigades*, chiefly made up of young workers setting themselves ambitious targets in plan fulfilment. They compete for the title of a "Socialist labour team".

Finally, the *Young Innovators' exhibition* movement should be mentioned as an opportunity for young people to unfold their creative energies. The idea is to submit innovations and inventions for consideration. The best results are displayed in public at the annual Young Innovators' exhibition (MMM). The number of those involved is growing all the time. In 1967 the figure was about 400,000 boys and girls whereas in 1973 it was already as high as 1.7 million. Last year they solved far more than 300,000 problems to improve production or introduce new techniques.

What is being done for newly weds?

Most marriages are contracted rather early in life. However, a good deal of money is needed to set up a home of one's own. It is not always easy to procure it, especially so if one partner has not yet completed his training.

The socialist state regards it as its task to help all young married couples and families to get off to a good start. In so doing it relieves also parents of much of their burden.

Since 1972 newly wed couples in the GDR have benefited from special privileges in addition to what we have mentioned already.

Young couples marrying for the first time are granted an interest-free loan to the tune of 5,000 marks to furnish their home on condition that one of the two is a factory or office worker, cooperative farmer or student and that neither is older than 26. Their combined gross earnings must not be higher than 1,400 marks.

Newly weds may apply for a second interest-free loan to procure living space, for example by building an owner-occupied home, add new rooms to a house or buy shares in a workers' housebuilding society.

Repayment of these interest-free loans is scattered over a period of eight years. A sum of 1,000 marks is remitted on the birth of the first child, another 1,500 on the birth of the second and another 2,500 on the birth of the third. As we mentioned earlier in the text a family allowance of 1,000 marks is also granted for each child born.

Mention should also be made of special schemes to support girl students with a child and expectant mothers engaged in college studies. Financial and other aid is to help avoid an interruption or prolongation of study as far as possible.

Is dancing expensive?

To begin with, it must be admitted that there are not yet sufficient places to dance. On week-ends most discos and similar establishments are cram-full. Deputies, authorities and public organizations make great efforts to overcome this shortcoming through local initiative.

But it must be emphasized that in no case young people are "fleeced". Under the new Youth Act all institutions are bound to grant allowances and price reductions when dances are organized for young people. Admission fees vary from 50 pfennigs to 2.50 marks (depending on the quality of the band). Provisions have to be made that reasonably priced meals and soft drinks are available at dances for young people.

The number of youth clubs and discos in the GDR continues

to grow. The purpose is not only to dance but to talk to each other. Politicians are invited to discuss current problems, artists and scientists answer the questions of their audiences, and there are film shows and quizzes. At present, the number of discos is about 2,270, most of them set up on the initiative of young people and with their cooperation.

Operating in schools and universities, in enterprises and neighbourhoods are some 4,500 vocal groups (*Singegruppen*) the best of whom qualify for participation in the international "Political Song Festival" held in the GDR each year. In February 1974, it attracted soloists and groups from 23 countries. In late 1973 there existed over 2,500 youth clubs (the figure in May 1972 was 1,050), among them 142 film clubs.

The GDR has five theatres for young audiences: in Berlin, Dresden, Halle, Magdeburg and Leipzig. They can refer to the highest attendances as they are virtually always sold out.

That there are multifarious opportunities for meaningful leisure activities is also borne out by the regular festivals of young talent, numerous exhibitions of young artists and photographers, poets' workshops, literary contests and many other events. For example, the third national Friendship Gallery in Dresden featured over 800 works of paintings, prints and sculptures as well as over 200 pictures by amateur photographers. The youngest exhibitor was four years old, the oldest was 30.

It should be mentioned as well that young people in the GDR are voracious readers. In 1973 alone 450 well-produced titles of books for young readers were released in 11 million copies at very low prices. The number of readers under 14 years of age in Berlin's public lending libraries rose from roughly 45,000 in 1966 to 70,000 in 1972.

Any sport for anybody

Many people will have been amazed to learn that the team from the GDR as a relatively small country returned home with 66 medals after the Olympic Games in 1972. During the world skiing championships in Falun in February 1974 its sportsmen captured five world titles out of ten and finished runnerup in six cases. The GDR came second at the world handball championships in March 1974. The socialist countries took all the first seven places. This has led many people to ask for the secret behind these successes. Admittedly, chance always plays a certain role. But the results of the socialist countries in the world of sport are generally impressive. What are the reasons?

In the awareness that sport belongs to a happy and healthy life and serves the realization of people's individuality the Soviet Union and indeed all socialist countries began to lay the foundations for a mass sports movement at a very early date. This includes low contributions and admission fees as well as the construction of stadiums, sports grounds, gymnasiums and swimming pools, even in small towns and villages.

Anybody with such inclinations may go in for his favourite sport at little cost in the GDR. Yachting, tennis, riding, figure skating, gliding and motor boat racing are included. Monthly contributions are the same in all sports clubs. They are 1.30 marks for adults, 50 pfennigs for pupils and students and 20 pfennigs for children. More than two million citizens are organized in the country's sports federation, the DTSB.

Particular encouragement is given to sport among children and young people. Legislation to this effect was introduced already in 1950. The German Gymnastics and Sports Federation, the Free German Youth and the socialist educational institutions jointly organize what is known as the Spartakiad Games, a nation-wide contest in a wide range of events which involves three million boys and girls each year.

In addition, it is customary for many people to go in for some sport in enterprises, schools and neighbourhoods. The public



Midsummer night ball at Dresden's Zwinger during the workers' festival



"Keep fit by running" is a slogan widely observed in the GDR by young and old. Cross-country running adds to people's well-being and health



Mass sport under socialism engenders peak performances
Teams from socialist countries captured the first seven places at the world handball championships held in the GDR in 1974

Sport is a character-moulding factor. In the GDR sports associations, trade unions and other mass organizations go all lengths to enable all citizens to go in for sport at any time of the year without a financial burden.





Support for Indian farmers through modern combine harvesters from the GDR. The results are higher rice and wheat yields and less dependence on grain imports.



"Peace, friendship, anti-imperialist solidarity"—this slogan of the Tenth World Youth Festival in Berlin in 1973 brought the youth of all continents closer together. Shown on our picture is the French delegation during a meeting with students and young workers from the GDR and the Soviet Union.



Sympathy for and solidarity with the courageous Vietnamese people is something dear to the hearts of women and mothers in the GDR.



No secrets among friends. Marina Mironko and Vladimir Gorodetskin from Leningrad, masters in the art of china painting, exchanging experience in Meissen, a town renowned for its porcelain (above). Building workers from Berlin travelled to Moscow to learn from Soviet specialists (below). These are contacts that help strengthen the personal ties between people in these two friendly countries



Joint plans for the holidays are discussed here by skilled workers from the GDR, Poland, Hungary. They are also of one mind when it comes to fulfilling the plan at the nationally-owned Neugersdorf textile mill in Dresden county, Upper Lusatia.



Socialist integration for the benefit of each country.

Left: Headquarters of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance in Moscow. Right: Council meeting.

Friendly meeting between Leonid I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Erich Honecker, First Secretary of the SED Central Committee, and young Berlin workers.



interest in participatory sport is promoted everywhere, by organizations and mass media, competitions between families, tenants' committees, neighbourhoods, enterprises and classes at school.

We may therefore say that the performance level at the top is so high because there is such a broad basis at grass-roots level.

Why no widespread drug addiction?

In the GDR there is no mounting tide of narcotics addiction. Drug abuse is no widespread phenomenon under socialism. Parents have a feeling of security that their children will not become involved in drugs. Why?

We have not allowed drug abuse to be dismissed as harmless, to be extolled as modern or to be propagated as a "way out" in a pseudo-philosophical manner. Strict regulations in force at our frontiers protect us from influences and imports we do not want. In a socialist society no one can make a living by engaging in shady transactions spelling misery for other people. There is no "underworld".

But, most important of all, drug addiction as a mass phenomenon has no social basis here. The young generation uses all the opportunities it has to learn, to study and carry out its responsibilities. For everyone there is an aim in life which he can attain.

Certainly, there are also problems and worries. But no one is left to his own devices. The youth organization, the trade unions, the state, the working class, the community—they are all there to help.

Young socialists do not need hashish to escape from this world but they need strength to change this world. They do not exchange reality for deceptive dreams but make their dreams come true.

XI.

What happens when you are old?

People live longer these days. Life expectancy tends to rise. In the GDR it is 74 years for women and 69 years for men. This is five years more in both cases than in 1952. But with what feelings can people face the thought of old age?

Even when people grow old their well-being largely depends on whether they can pursue a job they have come to like. And if one day they retire they want to enjoy the respect of society for their many years of an active existence. They want to spend the evening of their lives in quiet and security. And if possible they want to do something useful.

Now let us see how the socialist state looks after its senior citizens.

At 50 on the scrap heap?

In a socialist society no one is thrown on the economic scrap-heap at 50. No one is sacked because he has passed a certain age limit. No one sees his pay cut for age reasons.

As socialists we feel that every person, irrespective of his age, should have the right to find happiness in some useful activity. Whoever is unable to work full time any longer should be given a place and a job in line with his state of health, his abilities and inclinations.

Half of the male retired population in the 65–70 age group and more than one-third of the female retired population in

the 65–70 age group continue in their jobs at their own request. On balance, one old-age pensioner in five is gainfully employed. Here we have confirmation of the findings of modern gerontology according to which participation in socially productive work tends to influence the process of ageing favourably and to retard it. The community has the advantage that the experience of senior citizens can be further turned to account.

What about pensions?

In the GDR it has not been easy to bring pensions in line with our wishes. As a result of the Nazi-provoked war there are 34 retired persons per 100 citizens of working age in this country. This explains why in the past pensions could only be increased gradually in accordance with the growth of labour productivity and national income.

However, the socialist state has guaranteed three things right from the beginning. Firstly, a uniform and clear-cut pension scheme based on a uniform social insurance system. Secondly, a guaranteed minimum pension for any working person. Thirdly, low and stable prices for all vital necessities, also in the interests of old-age pensioners.

Women of 60 and over and men of 65 and over are entitled to a retirement pension paid under the social insurance system if they have pursued a job liable to insurance for 15 years. Pensions are calculated on the basis of a person's length of service and the amount of the average gross earnings subject to contributions during the last 20 years of service. A flat rate of 110 marks is added in each case.

Biggest-ever pension increase

The biggest pension increase so far became effective on 1 September 1972. It had been jointly decided by the SED Central Committee, the FDGB National Executive and the GDR Council of Ministers (Government). Pensions and social

welfare benefits went up for 3.9 million citizens by an average of 45 marks but often by far more.

Special consideration was given to retired persons whose pensions were particularly low because of their low pay during the capitalist era. The guaranteed minimum pension was increased depending on length of service. It gives each retired couple a minimum monthly income of between 400 and 480 marks provided that both are entitled to a pension.

There were also increases in minimum survivor pensions and minimum pensions for war-disabled persons.

All these increases were made at stable prices, at low rents and without insurance contributions being raised.

Special benefits for women

In general, years of unemployment, schooling and study are taken into account in calculating pensions. For women special regulations are in force under which every child born is considered the equivalent of one year of activity subject to insurance.

For women having given birth to more than two children the requisite minimum duration of activity subject to insurance is reduced by one year for the third and any further child. If

Public spending

1966-70 110,000 million marks

per head of the population
6,500 marks

1971-75 145,000 million marks

per head of the population
8,500 marks



a woman has given birth to five and more children she is entitled to a pension of 200 marks even if she cannot produce proof of a sufficiently long period of employment.

Also, women with an employment record of more than 20 years are granted an extra one to five years depending on the length of their service. Hence their pensions are not lower than those of men with the same pay although they may go into retirement five years earlier.

Full pension for those continuing in their jobs

We have mentioned already that many old-age pensioners in the GDR continue in their jobs after they have reached retirement age. Since there is no unemployment anyone has the possibility to find a suitable employment. This adds considerably to the income of old-age pensioners as they get their full retirement pension in addition to their wages or salary.

Since 1972 disability pensioners have been in a position to earn up to 350 marks, the current minimum pay fixed by the state, without their disability pension being reduced. They may not be paid less regardless of whether they work as a doorkeeper, errand-boy or homemaker.

Is there security also for farmers in old age?

Farmers do not depend on support from their children in old age, either. They are also entitled to retirement pensions.

Members of cooperative farms, craftsmen's cooperatives and self-employed persons are subject to compulsory insurance with the *Staatliche Versicherung* (state insurance scheme). Those employed in cooperative farms pay contributions equivalent to 10 per cent of their earnings with 7,200 marks per year as the upper limit subject to contributions. Members of craftsmen's cooperatives likewise pay 10 per cent up to a monthly income of 600 marks.

In both cases the cooperatives contribute another 10 per cent for the insurants. This guarantees material maintenance in the event of illness and in old age.

Self-employed persons with the exception of doctors and dentists in private practice, veterinary surgeons, cultural workers and artists affiliated to the social insurance scheme for factory and office workers are bound to pay 20 per cent in contributions up to a limit of 7,200 marks a year.

All the categories mentioned here may take out a voluntary supplementary insurance on the same terms as factory and office workers.

What has the voluntary insurance scheme to offer?

Whoever wants to make provisions for a higher pension in line with his income may do so. The supplementary insurance scheme introduced on a voluntary basis in 1971 has solved a number of problems arising from the fact that the upper limit subject to contributions was fixed at 600 marks a month whereas the earnings of many working people continued to rise. A gap had emerged between people's growing income and the maximum amount of pensions and sick pay. The voluntary insurance scheme remedies this situation.

- Employees taking out a voluntary insurance are entitled to
- supplementary old-age and disability pensions depending on the duration of insurance coverage and their monthly gross income exceeding 600 marks (but not higher than 1,200 marks);
 - supplementary survivor benefits for widows and orphans;
 - higher sick pay when no wage compensation is granted any longer (cf. section on the health service).

- The voluntary pension scheme is financed
- out of employees' contributions, i.e. 10 per cent of their monthly income exceeding 600 marks (with 1,200 marks as the upper limit);
 - by the employing firms which pay the same amount;

— by the state which guarantees payment of these benefits irrespective of the contributions collected.

This shows that combined compulsory and voluntary insurance makes it possible for working people in the GDR to secure up to 90 per cent of their net earnings as a retirement or disability pension while paying no more than 10 per cent in contributions.

As a result of all these new stipulations and benefits pensions in the GDR went up by 15 per cent in 1973 and will increase further.

Who looks after senior citizens?

Material maintenance in old age is, however, but one side of the coin. Elderly people have many other problems to face. Loneliness and helplessness may blight the evening of their lives. What is being done by socialist society in this respect?

We do not claim here that everything is already for the best. But much is being done already indeed. Most senior citizens in our society have a feeling that they are safe, well looked after and respected by others.

In the GDR it is especially the *Volkssolidarität* that takes care of the aged. It organizes neighbourly aid and cultural events, and distributes warm meals for pensioners in need of care. More than 600 clubs and centres of *Volkssolidarität* are open to senior citizens. In 1972, 100,000 cultural performances were staged specifically for old-age pensioners. Social and cultural activities are largely financed by the 1.6 million members of *Volkssolidarität*. They are organized and directed by 116,718 voluntary aids.

In many enterprises there exist special veterans' trade union committees to look after former members of the staff in conjunction with *Volkssolidarität*. Retired workers are invited for social gatherings, meetings and other occasions. At times they may be asked to give their advice on major plan targets. They have a share in the holiday trips available, they are visited during illness and on their "round" birthdays.

Let us also mention here that intending nurses, medical students and Young Pioneers (the GDR's children's organization) look after senior citizens, help them do their shopping, keep them company and inform them on what is going on in the world.

What is the cost of a place in a home for the aged?

Various attempts are being made in the GDR to find the most suitable forms of accommodation for elderly people. Apart from homes for the aged there exist entire apartment houses for retired persons. In other cases elderly persons move into the lower storeys of normal modern blocks of flats so as not to have contacts only with other people of their age.

Homes for the aged are mostly operated by the state. Old-age pensioners are charged 105.40 marks a month in such a home in Berlin and 90 marks elsewhere in the country, which includes full board and lodging. A place in a nursing home comes to 136.40 marks in Berlin and to 105 elsewhere.

XII.

Who is running the country?

A constantly rising standard of living corresponding to the results of their work and unaffected by crisis or war can there be for the working people only when they are masters of their own destiny.

Let us therefore ask: Who holds power in the GDR? Who calls the tune? In whose interests are laws drafted and decisions taken? What is the influence of the individual? Who is running the country?

The working class gives the lead

Just as in all socialist states, power has been vested in the working class, and this for more than twenty years now. Led by its party, the SED, it has created a socialist state of workers and farmers. It determines government policy. It holds the key positions in the state apparatus. This provides the guarantee that all organs of the socialist state are guided by the interests of the working people, the working class, the cooperative farmers, the intelligentsia and all other sections of the community.

Recruited from the ranks of the working class are 60 per cent of all officers of state in the various government departments, 70 per cent of all employees of county and district councils and 75 per cent of all mayors in towns and villages.

Since the working class gives the lead in this state the ideas

and proposals, interests and needs of workers are given close attention in our community. No one will find himself at a disadvantage before any institution—whether an authority, housing commission or court of law—because he is “only” a worker. On the contrary, the word of the working man carries special weight at all levels of the state and society.

The influence of the trade unions

With a membership of 7.3 million the FDGB is the biggest public organization in the GDR. The working class exerts much of its influence on public affairs through the trade unions. Their sweeping rights concerning large-scale participation in the building of an advanced socialist society in all fields of national life are stipulated in the Constitution.

The trade unions have a group of their own in Parliament. They have the right to initiate legislation and to exercise public control over the observance of the working people's legally guaranteed rights.

The Government closely cooperates with the trade unions. All important Bills related to working and living conditions are jointly discussed and adopted only in agreement with them. The big social and welfare programme launched in July 1972 was based on a joint decision by the workers' party, the trade unions and the Government. Suggestions and proposals submitted by the trade unions for the annual economic plans are carefully studied by the Council of Ministers and incorporated in the plan.

Especially after the Eighth Congress of the SED a new and higher quality has been attained in the cooperation of the socialist organs of government and the trade unions. Full consensus on the objective in mind — the growing satisfaction of people's material and cultural needs—does not exclude discussions on the methods to be employed and a different approach to individual problems.

Who makes the laws and for whom?

In whose interests laws are drafted and enacted in a country greatly depends on the social composition of Parliament.

In the People's Chamber, the GDR's supreme law-making body, workers make up 43.8 per cent of all M.P.s, cooperative farmers 15.4 per cent, salaried employees 20.4 per cent and members of the intelligentsia 20.2 per cent. It is easy to imagine that such a Parliament does not adopt legislation ultimately directed against the working population. There are neither lobbyism and corruption nor agreements concluded by companies with individual M.P.s to secure influence in Parliament.

Represented in the People's Chamber are all political and public organizations united in the National Front of the GDR with the aim of building a socialist society and made up of people from all working sections of the population. The SED, the party of the working class, comes first with 127 deputies. Next comes the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions (FDGB) with 68. The four other parties in the Democratic Bloc, the Democratic Farmers' Party (DBD), the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the Liberal Democratic Party (LDPD) and the National Democratic Party (NDPD) each have 52 M.P.s. The youth organization (FDJ), the women's organization (DFD) and the League of Culture are represented by 40, 35 and 22 deputies, respectively.

In the GDR it is now the standard practice to submit important Bills to the whole population for public discussion. Cases in point were the Labour Code, the Family Code, the Socialist Constitution and the Local Government Act. In each instance many thousand constructive ideas and proposals for amendment were made, which were then reconsidered, examined and incorporated into the final version of the Bill. The same was true of the new Youth Act whose draft was discussed in the course of seven months with more than 5.4 million citizens of all age groups taking part. 4,821 proposals were submitted with the result that about 200 revisions were made before the Bill was passed into law. In this way workers, farmers and intellectuals help shape socialist legal conditions

in a very direct manner. Their influence on public affairs is not confined to the election of deputies.

Every individual law is in the interests of the working people and of social progress whether it relates to the introduction of 10-year general polytechnical schooling, the termination of unwanted pregnancy, large-scale social and welfare measures or a modern socialist criminal law doing away with provisions inherited from the age of Prussianism.

A workers' and farmers' government

Working people in the socialist community of states have the reassuring feeling that they are not governed by powers alien to them. This also holds good of our republic.

Like the GDR's Council of State under the chairmanship of Willi Stoph, the Council of Ministers is made up of workers and farmers, salaried employees and members of the intelligentsia, antifascists and anti-militarists who have proved conscientious and ardent champions of the working people's interest and have the necessary qualifications as leaders.

Horst Sindermann, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, was born into a working-class family and took part in the struggles of the working class from boyhood on. The Nazis kept him imprisoned for eleven years in jails and concentration camps. Since 1945 he has held various posts in the party of the working class and in the Government. All ministers have taken a similar development.

The Council of Ministers Act passed on 16 October 1972 provides that the Government shall closely cooperate with the trade unions under the leadership of the party of the working class. It says: "It shall closely cooperate with the trade unions as the comprehensive class organization of the working class in building an advanced socialist society and strengthening the socialist state in all fields of national life. In conjunction with the National Executive of the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions it shall lay down measures for the development of working and living conditions, health protec-

tion and safety at work, work environment, cultural and sporting activities of the working people."

And it adds: "It shall make sure that the working people and their public organizations, particularly the trade unions, take part in drawing up and implementing legal provisions."

Participation ensured for all

It is a characteristic feature of socialist democracy that an extremely vast proportion of the working population is actively involved in public affairs, in decisions on major issues, in the solution of social problems. And this is so in all spheres of life. Everyone has a say in this country. Anybody who takes part in the construction effort can also take part in planning and public affairs. As a matter of fact, one adult citizen in four does so already for the benefit of his fellow-citizens on a voluntary basis. A wide range of opportunities have been created for this. Let us mention here only a few:

- 400,400 citizens cooperate with deputies in the standing commissions and working parties of the elected representative bodies in certain fields;
- 2,138,000 elected trade union officials, representing the ruling working class, have a voice in all matters in factories and offices;
- 48,730 elected lay judges pronounce justice together with professional judges;
- 255,400 manual and non-manual workers are members of disputes and arbitration commissions in enterprises and neighbourhoods, which deal with complaints and petty offences without recourse to lawcourts;
- 633,000 citizens discuss and help decide schooling problems in class parents' groups and parent-teacher associations;
- 335,000 members of all political parties and non-affiliated persons serve on the committees and working groups of the National Front for the welfare of fellow-citizens in their neighbourhood;

- 170,600 citizens are voluntary collaborators of the Workers' and Farmers' Inspectorate which checks on abidance by legal provisions and takes action against violations of price regulations and waste of public property.

This goes to show that the running of public and economic affairs in a socialist society is not a privilege of professional politicians but an affair of the working class, indeed of the whole people. It is quite obvious that for any working person it is more satisfactory to know that his advice is sought, that his voice carries weight and that he readily gets a hearing than to know that his civic role is confined to the creation of material values whose distribution, use and allocation he may not influence.

The real influence which all citizens bring to bear day in day out on the running of public affairs is an essential factor of the high quality of life under socialism.

Who are the judges, officers and policemen?

The composition of the judiciary is of special interest in discussing the question of whether a worker is granted justice both in civil and labour cases, whether he can freely represent his interests.

Three quarters of all judges have a working-class background, 14.4 per cent are salaried employees by their social origin, 3.9 per cent farmers, 1 per cent members of the intelligentsia and 6.2 per cent craftsmen and tradesmen.

It should be added that judges in the GDR present themselves to the public before nomination, are elected by the representative bodies (Parliament and local assemblies) and report to them about their activities. There is no class justice alien to the people.

Eighty per cent of all officers of the People's Police and the National People's Army also have a working-class background. The generals of the police force and the armed forces largely have a labour and trade union record and actively fought against Nazism. The younger among them have been

trained as young socialists at our schools and in our youth organization and they have attended socialist military academies.

Hence the representatives of the workers' and farmers' power all have emerged from the people of whom they form part and whom they serve.

XIII.

What does a man count for?

Visitors to socialist countries often say that what strikes them in particular is people's community feeling and fellowship. And indeed the emergence of new human relations is one of the finest and most important features of socialist society.

People freely realize their individuality

The free and universal development of man, of his creative powers and talents, his education and culture, his character and ethical values is the aim of socialist society. The activities of the working-class party, the socialist state and all political and public organizations are geared to this aim. We are guided by what Karl Marx once said: For man to be able to live and act in a humane way the conditions in which he lives must be made humane.

For us, a universally educated socialist man is neither a pipe dream nor a distant aim. Certainly, it takes time for new human values and patterns of behaviour to mature. But in the GDR just as in the other socialist countries firm social foundations have been created for them. Working-class power and socialist public property release all the driving forces for public-spirited activity and solidarity.

As we have explained already the GDR naturally strives hard to secure a high material standard of living for everyone, more and better consumer goods and modern housing and give the

working people a large measure of prosperity. But material well-being is not the only aim in life. What people seek more than anything else is a decent, mentally stimulating and meaningful life in a thriving and healthy society where there is community feeling and solidarity.

Feeling safe within the community

A distinctive feature of life in a socialist society is people's growing feeling of being safe there. They are not indifferent to each other's problems. No one is left to fend for himself. There are no outcasts.

The spirit of solidarity inherent in the working class, its new, socialist patterns of behaviour emerging in the process of work in what is known here as socialist brigades are increasingly determining the thoughts and actions of the other working people and changing them in a socialist direction. Needless to say, this development does not take place overnight nor is it devoid of conflicts and contradictions. Deeply engrained habits of thinking are tenacious. Negative outside influences do not play a minor role, either. But mutual aid and fellowship are already the dominant features.

This development is not taking place automatically. It is being systematically encouraged by the school, theatre, cinema and television. The cooperation of all parties and organizations of the GDR under the leadership of the working-class party in the National Front plays a big role here. It is a vast socialist people's movement, which is also assisted by hundreds of thousands of non-affiliated citizens. The committees of the National Front and their tenants' organizations are instrumental in developing new human relations based on neighbourly aid in the residential areas and help organize a rich cultural and intellectual life involving as many people as possible.

The National Front awards medals and prizes to those who deserve well of the community of their fellow-citizens and neighbours. Among those decorated you will find the worker

repairing climbing frames in a children's playground in his spare time, the trade unionist looking after his retired fellow-workers in an exemplary manner, the nurse taking care of senior citizens in her neighbourhood, the policeman teaching children to behave correctly in road traffic after his working hours, or the pupil doing the shopping for a sick neighbour.

In short: In the GDR people are not judged by their power or fortune but by their human qualities, by their contribution to the welfare of socialist society. This is an atmosphere marked by completely new ethical and moral standards. This is the reason why people here are increasingly helping and supporting each other, why victims of an accident are not left lying by the roadside only because nobody wants to have the fur-covered seat pads of his car soiled and why children are not beaten to death only because television-hungry neighbours turn a deaf ear.

As inevitably as capitalism turns the people against each other, condemns them to loneliness and detours their human values socialism brings people closer to each other, engenders community feeling and truly humane thinking and acting.

Good friends stand by our side

Another aspect of GDR citizens' new approach to life is the fact that they have the feeling of belonging to a new world, the great socialist family of nations. This gives their life a profound purpose and content.

People in the GDR know that good friends stand by their side. For almost thirty years now we have been linked with the Soviet Union in a close fraternal alliance. It was the soldiers of the world's first socialist state who brought freedom to the working class and all working people in the GDR after an agonizing battle. Ever since the country of Lenin has helped us in a thousand ways. As things stand now, socialist integration and cooperation is at an advanced stage in all fields of the economy, science and technology. Important projects are

jointly studied and put into practice. The Soviet Union is our biggest trading partner. The most comprehensive long-term trade agreement ever concluded between two countries guarantees between 75 and 80 per cent of our raw materials supplies, the import of crucial equipment and the sale of our export goods for many years to come.

Equally close ties link us with our immediate neighbours, Poland and Czechoslovakia, and with the other socialist states. For 25 years these countries have cooperated on an equal footing in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) to push jointly ahead with economic development and raise the living standards throughout the socialist community.

Socialist economic integration within the CMEA tends to multiply our economic potentialities. There are no powerful countries enriching themselves at the expense of the weaker ones nor are inflation, price increases and monetary crises imported or exported. The emphasis is on a broad and generous exchange of experience in all fields, the avoidance of parallelism and faulty developments and mutual fraternal aid.



This new spirit of internationalism and solidarity, which also links us with all working people throughout the world and with the peoples of the young nations is a source of inspiration to the thoughts and actions of the people in this country. Our friends in the socialist community, even if they live as far afield as Ulan Bator or Havana, are as near to us today as our immediate neighbour.

Certain of a genuine peace policy

It is extremely reassuring for any GDR citizen and his family to know that in the state he lives in there are no forces with a stake in armament, aggravation of tensions or expansionism and that even less there can be a question of such people holding any power. The fact that workers and farmers govern the country, that all means of production belong to the people is the sound foundation for a consistent policy of peace.

The first law promulgated by the world's first socialist state was the Decree on Peace. For more than 55 years the Soviet Union has done everything in her power to create the best possible external conditions, i. e. a secured peace, for the great programme of establishing a genuinely humane, free, socialist society. Today, the whole socialist community of states consistently champions peaceful coexistence between states with differing social systems.

In full agreement with the great peace programme of the CPSU the Eighth SED Congress in 1971 developed a clearly defined concept for its contribution to the safeguarding of peace and peaceful cooperation in Europe. It has implemented it step by step by entering into a number of international accords. The GDR helped bring about the Quadripartite Agreement on West Berlin and initiated moves towards peaceful coexistence with the Federal Republic. She concluded a series of treaties for the benefit of peaceful cooperation in Europe and of the people in the two states, notably the Treaty on General Relations between the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany signed on 21

December 1972 in Berlin. She strictly abides by these treaties in letter and spirit and energetically promotes the easing of tensions.

Each citizen in the GDR can pursue his job or seek recreation in the awareness that he lives in a socialist system which is peaceful by its very nature and which is strengthened for no other purpose than to preserve peace.

XIV.

What does the future hold?

What is the general trend of developments in my country? How am I going to live tomorrow? Can I face the future with composure? It is on the answer to these questions that every person's standard of living depends.

No question-mark hangs over people's future

For the citizens of the GDR as well as those of the other socialist countries the first three years of the 1971-5 Five-Year Plan were extremely successful. They brought a host of social and welfare measures which improved the lives of millions of people. The plan targets fixed were reached in almost every respect and often even surpassed.

Every working person in the GDR knows today that this development will continue in the years ahead. Everyone knows with absolute certainty that he will live better tomorrow than he does today. Everyone knows that neither today nor in 1975 nor in 1980 will he lose his job or put on short-time working or deprived of his social gains. On the contrary. By then, his social situation will have further improved on planned lines. He is even in a position to predict to what extent this will be the case.

This stability marking developments in the socialist countries of Europe has also been noted by the UN Economic

Commission for Europe (ECE). Its survey for 1973 emphasized that the European socialist countries were able to register "accelerated economic growth and a continued expansion of their foreign trade". The national income produced in the area had risen much faster than in 1972. Total industrial output had increased by an average of 7.1 per cent on the previous year so that in almost all socialist countries it was higher than planned. The ECE report added: "Price stability is a common goal of these countries. This holds chiefly good of the stability of retail prices."

Targets of the National Economic Plan

On 19 December 1973 the People's Chamber of the GDR adopted the National Economic Plan and the national budget for 1974. They are evidence that the GDR continues to forge steadily ahead also this year. There is no deficit whatever. Industrial output will go up by 6.7 per cent and labour productivity in the nationally-owned industry by 6.0 per cent just as planned (the plan for 1973 provided for 6.5 and 5.7 per cent, respectively). These are indicators whose fulfilment will enable working conditions and living standards to be considerably improved further.

Industrial goods production will exceed 222,000 million marks this year. Novel and perfected consumer goods will go into production in addition to what had been envisaged originally. Hence the plan is clearly geared to the better satisfaction of consumer demand. The supply of goods will go up by 5.2 per cent. The monetary income of the population is to rise by 4.5 per cent, which is another substantial increase. End-of-the-year bonuses will be paid in all enterprises. The public funds earmarked for the population will go up another 6.5 per cent to reach a total of 35,600 million marks or 1,533 marks per head of the population.

Medical services for the population will also be improved further. Investments in the health and social services, chiefly

for modern state-run health centres, will be up 17 per cent on the previous year. 1,118 new work places for doctors and dentists are to be established.

No doubts about the road ahead

But people in the GDR do not only know how their standard of living will develop in the current year. The Five-Year Plan clearly outlines the further road of the socialist economy until 1975. And the next Five-Year Plan for the 1976-80 period is already under consideration. It will bring faster rather than slower progress in all fields.

This forward planning is realistic because it takes account of the real possibilities of our own country and because it is harmonized with the Soviet Union and the other fraternal socialist countries. It profits from the advantages offered by socialist division of labour on an international scale and it relies on the initiative and creativity of the working class, the cooperative farmers, the intelligentsia and all other working people.

It can be foreseen even now that at the end of the current Five-Year Plan the real income of all citizens will have risen by more than 22 per cent, the rate of increase envisaged in 1971. The income of wage-earners and salaried employees will have risen by an annual rate exceeding the 4.3 per cent envisaged, with rents, prices and charges having remained stable.

It is just as certain that the plan target of constructing and modernizing 500,000 flats to improve the housing conditions of 1.5 million citizens will also be surpassed. The party of the working class has already launched another programme under which 750,000 flats are to be built until 1980 to end the housing stress. By 1990 there will no longer be any jerry-built, poorly equipped flats devoid of any modern conveniences, fresh air and sunlight as they were once built under capitalism for profit reasons. Only then will the housing question have

been solved in a socialist sense—without land speculation, building scandals, rackrenting and the striking contrast between sumptuous villas and “provisional dwellings”.

Ten-year schooling for all will be largely guaranteed by 1975. The original plan of promoting 90 per cent of all pupils from the 8th to the 9th grade of the general polytechnical schools was achieved already in 1973. The plans to build at least 16,000 classrooms, and 500 gymnasiums in schools, and to make available 750 places in kindergartens per 1,000 children below school age and 300 places in crèches per 1,000 children in the 0-3 age group had been attained or largely surpassed by April 1974.

Under the current Five-Year Plan almost one million school-leavers are trained to become skilled workers. This means that with a few exceptions (about 0.2 per cent) all young people learn a trade or profession. Almost 300,000, at least half of them girls, enter a university or technical college in the 1971-5 period. Conditions for study are being improved by the provision of at least 22,000 new places in lecture-rooms and a corresponding number of places in university restaurants. Between 1971 and 1975 something like 225,000 university and technical college graduates are employed in all spheres of the national economy.

On balance, the public spending on education, health services, social insurance, culture, sport and recreation and price supports in 1975 will be 35 per cent higher than in 1970. In 1975 a family of four is to receive monthly benefits totalling 465 marks as compared with 360 marks in 1970. These must be added to individual earnings.

Social progress is the cardinal law

All this goes to show that it is the cardinal law of a socialist state's economic and social policy to ensure a high standard of living for the majority of the working population, for the mass of working-class families with children, for the millions who create all the nation's wealth as wage-earners, salaried

employees, cooperative farmers and members of the intelligentsia.

Naturally, we are by no means satisfied yet with things as they are. Many problems remain to be solved. It is impossible to change everything overnight. We are no magicians. Hence we cannot distribute more than has been produced. But what has been produced is distributed fairly.

If—and this is necessary indeed—all circumstances of people's lives are considered, i. e. social security, modern educational facilities and exemplary medical care for all, equal rights for women and youth, wide dissemination of culture and art, guarantees against crises and misuse for military adventures, the feeling of safety provided in the GDR, it will emerge that the citizens of the GDR have attained a high standard of living. They are absolutely certain that it will continue to rise steadily on the strength of their own performance. Social progress is the cardinal law of socialism.

The joint advantages of socialism as it really exists

What we have said here about the standard of living and the way of life in the GDR as a socialist state is equally true of all countries of the socialist community. Everywhere the party of the working class is guided by the same principles in its

Production of consumer goods in the CMEA countries

	1950	1960	1972
Television sets	119,000	2,716,000	8,172,000
Domestic refrigerators	138,000	861,000	7,005,000
Domestic washing machines	43,000	1,997,000	5,772,000

policies and considers its primary task to be to ensure the rapid development of living and cultural standards and of new, human relations of a socialist type. Everywhere there are similar legal provisions and practical institutions in the field of social policy, workers' rights, socialist education, socialist democracy, science and culture. Everywhere man and the full development of his individual values and faculties amid working people freed from exploitation is at the centre of the activities of the Marxist-Leninist party, the workers' and farmers' state and the public organizations.

Of course, the most advanced of all is the first state to establish a socialist order: the Soviet Union. Although in 1917 it was a backward country grappling with the legacy of Czarism and thus was very badly placed for the building of a new society the Soviet Union now leads the world in many fields of the economy, science and technology and especially of social policy, education and culture. Calculated on a per capita basis the Soviet Union has the largest number of doctors, scientists, scholars and students, the biggest output of books, the lowest statutory retirement age, and the lowest taxes, i.e. people there will soon pay none at all. For 50 years now the Soviet population has paid the lowest charges for heating, hot water, electricity, gas and telephone, and the lowest underground and bus fares.

All other socialist countries draw on the experience of the Soviet Union, which they apply in accordance with their national conditions. They, too, can refer to a steady growth of the standard of living. In Czechoslovakia the prices for bread, flour, milk, cheese and other staple foods have remained at their low level. For 30 years Bulgarians have paid only

Doctors per 10,000 population

USSR	25.3	USA	15.7
Czechoslovakia	19.9	Belgium	15.5
GDR	18.0	France	12.9
Bulgaria	17.8	Japan	11.0

a penny or so for a bus or tram ride. Dozens of more examples may be given to illustrate the security and quiet prevailing in the socialist world. Of course, certain differences in living standards subsist on historical grounds. However, they do not tend to become more blatant but are being overcome step by step. Here we have the aim underlying socialist economic integration, the ever broader cooperation of all socialist countries in planning, research, production and trade, science, education, culture and social services.

Although in general, the socialist states have not yet reached or surpassed the most advanced of the capitalist nations in terms of production output the socialist system has made it possible for exemplary solutions to be found in key sectors of life to satisfy basic needs of the working class and of all working people.

In the face of many difficulties socialism has proved for the first time in history that rapid and steady economic growth, guaranteed full employment and stable prices are no mutually exclusive phenomena. People in the socialist countries have come to see the following and indeed find it confirmed every day anew:

Socialism means maximum social security for all working people, and end to exploitation and the fear of losing one's livelihood, the absolute certainty of never receiving the "golden handshake".

Socialism means permanently rising living and cultural

College graduates per 10,000 population (acc. to UNESCO Yearbook, 1971)

USSR	38.2	Japan	27.7
Czechoslovakia	25.5	USA	26.4
GDR	18.8	FRG	13.0
Bulgaria	18.4	France	11.4
Poland	16.7	Italy	10.8

standards on the basis of a crisis-free production growing on planned lines and advancing socialist integration.

Socialism means that workers by hand or brain are respected at their place of work and that human dignity is respected everywhere in the community.

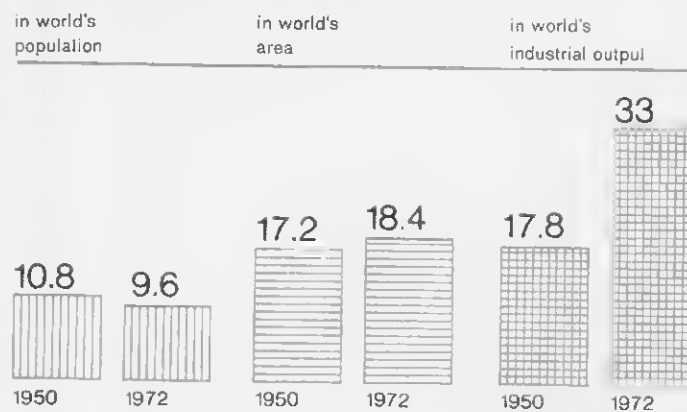
Socialism means high education standards for all, which is essential both for mastering the processes of the scientific and technological revolution and for taking part in a democratic and competent manner in all political decisions.

Socialism means elimination of the imperialist root causes of war and the absolute certainty that no war will be unleashed from one's own country. This means an energetic stand for détente and peaceful coexistence.

Socialism means that people can plan their own future far ahead and shape it in a conscious way.

The working people of all socialist countries benefit from the advantages of the socialist system, which has been created and is being perfected under the leadership of the working class and its Marxist-Leninist party. This is the reason why the

Share of CMEA countries (in per cent)



citizens of the GDR say that their life has taken on a new sense, a new content, a new and higher quality.

Well, then, how do people live in the GDR? They live safely and quietly, in freedom and security, and they are creative and alive to the world around them. But in any case they will live even better tomorrow.